This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

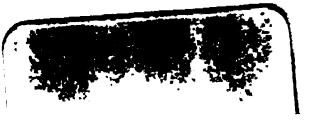
HW 1XMH Z

Carl Hall of Tait

Everett T. Tomlinson

Digitized by Google

KE 3825



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Carl Hall of Tait

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

" ' I lost my way coming up from the station ' "

Page 11

Digitized by Google

CARL HALL OF TAIT

BY

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

Author of

"The Winner Series," "The Ward Hill Series"

"The Blue and Buff Series," etc.

PHILADELPHIA

THE GRIFFITH & ROWLAND PRESS

BOSTON CHICAGO ST. LOUIS

TORONTO, CAN.

Digitized by Google

KE 3825

HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

Copyright 1914 by
A. J. ROWLAND, Secretary

Published August, 1914

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

Is there any way by which a boy can develop strength of character except by learning to overcome difficulties? Whatever may be the good qualities he acquires, courage is elemental. It may be developed; it is a question whether or not it can ever be implanted. An educated, cultured man, who may be lacking in that primary attribute, is never honored by any one, perhaps least of all by himself.

And the problems of boy life are as hard for the boy to meet and solve as are the later problems for the man. Teaching how tenacity of purpose may be gained is a part of school life not always outlined in the catalogue. How to stand against the envy, which is ever the price of success, may not consciously be learned from text-books, but nevertheless it is a vital part of school-training. No man has learned how to live unless he has developed a feeling of contempt for pettiness.

All these and many other desirable qualities of the best manhood may not be directly learned from books. Even religion in its best sense is a life.

In this story the writer has endeavored to portray the development of some of these qualities re-

Digitized by Google

ferred to in the life of a normal boy in the midst of some of the conditions that confront him in the school life of to-day. Carl Hall is neither a prig nor a prodigy. Perhaps his likeness to the ordinary boy may inspire others of similar age and training with desires and motives not unlike those which Carl showed when he was face to face with some of the severest conflicts of boy life. The rival and the envious, like the poor, are always with us.

Many of the incidents incorporated in this tale are true. The writer has tried, at any rate, to make them all true to life. If the reading of this story shall interest his young readers and inspire them with desires to make of themselves men, whatever their calling in life may be, he will feel that his work has not been done in vain.

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	The New Boy	11
II.	Preparations	21
III.	A Cry for Help	30
IV.	The Recruit	39
V.	With the Ball	48
VI.	The Woes of Perk	57
VII.	Mr. Reed's Visit	67
VIII.	The First League Game	77
IX.	After the Game	87
X.	Troubles Multiply	96
XI.	A Call for a Resignation	104
XII.	Carlton's Perplexity	114
XIII.	Carlton's Decision	123
XIV.	Carlton's Advice	133
XV.	Suspended	143

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
XVI.	The Illness of Perkins	153
XVII.	The Distress of Perkins	162
XVIII.	The Rescue	171
XIX.	A Startling Report	179
XX.	Carlton Will Not Play	188
XXI.	Another Proposition	197
XXII.	The Game	205
XXIII.	A Noisy Summons	212
XXIV.	Another Deserter	220
XXV.	An Invitation	229
XXVI.	Solomon Isaacs	238
XXVII.	The Meeting of the Association	246
XXVIII.	The Division	256
XXIX.	An Effort at Reconciliation	265
XXX.	Conclusion	274

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"'I lost my way coming up from the station'" Frontispiece

"'Just look at me, will you?'" 30

"He fled at his utmost speed" 52

"He noticed a rope hanging from the window of Perkins' room" 93

"'Why don't you say what you came to say?'" 108

"The coach hesitated" 123

"'I have been suspended!'" 143

"'Anceps says that if our team loses it'll be because you throw the game'" 187

"Waving his arms like a windmill and shouting" 212

"He went coasting with Fletcher and Webb" 231

"'I am not willing to serve as a delegate'" .. 255

"He was doing his utmost to avoid contact with his enemies" 272

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Carl Hall of Tait

CHAPTER I

THE NEW BOY

"IS this the way to East Hall?"

"Yes. Going there?"

"That's what I am, but I lost my way coming up from the station."

"I'm going right past it myself. I'll be glad to have you come with me. Can I give you a lift with your bag?" Carlton Hall repressed the smile that rose to his lips and good-naturedly looked at the boy before him.

It was manifest that the newcomer was unfamiliar with the grounds and buildings of the Tait School. Indeed, it was equally clear that his life had not been spent in places where he was brought into close contact with the ways of the world. A large, antiquated black slouch hat covered his head. Apparently this hat was several sizes too large, and Carlton smiled as he thought of the preceding generations that might have worn it before it had descended to its present owner. A celluloid collar adorned the neck of the new boy, his shirtsleeves, without cuffs, extended several inches below those of his coat, and there was a gap of several inches

Digitized by Google

between the shoes he wore and the bottom of his trousers. Tall, plainly not less than six feet in height, and yet so slight that his tallness was accentuated, the new boy evidently was one certain to have experiences that he would remember long, before he had been enrolled in the school many days.

Carlton Hall, faultlessly clad, self-possessed, familiar with the ways of the world as well as with the school ways, a senior now that his preceding three years as a student had been safely passed, was the embodiment of self-possession and good nature. The smile of amusement that for a moment appeared upon his face when he first greeted the newcomer speedily passed and, in the kindness of his heart, he now was more than willing to do what was in his power for the new boy, who so plainly was unfamiliar with his surroundings.

"What is your name?" inquired Carlton, smiling as he spoke, in a way that had made him the most popular boy in the Tait School.

"Simeon Galusha Perkins," replied the newcomer. "I live in Springtown Corners and I decided to come to the Tait School for two reasons."

"You decided wisely," laughed Carlton. "There are more than two or two hundred reasons why any fellow ought to be glad to come here. Are you a football star?"

"I never did anything in football. I had to work in the mill at the Corners. I used to get some time for baseball in the spring because it wasn't dark

Digitized by Google

until long after supper. I think I can make the football team, though," Simeon added.

"Can you run?"

"Of course I can run."

"What time can you make?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Are you a sprinter or a long-distance man?"

"What's that?"

Carlton laughed as he inquired, "What position on the nine did you play?"

"I don't know what you mean. It was two o'cat, we called it. Sometimes we played 'ante, ante over.'"

"What's that?" laughed Carlton. "I never heard of that game."

"Huh!" retorted the new boy, "I supposed everybody knew what that was."

"You'll have to show us how it is played."

"All right, I'll do it; but I'm not so much interested in the games as I am in the intellectual side of the school work. Who is the best speaker in the school?"

"Why, I don't know," replied Carlton, hesitating a moment. "I guess Field or 'Sissy.'"

"What's his name?" inquired Simeon.

"Sissy Stewart. He speaks thrillers. He sings and weeps and does all sorts of stunts when he declaims."

"That's the work that interests me more than anything else," suggested Simeon. "You know, I

Digitized by Google

have been reading what Daniel Webster did and how he had to teach school and do all sorts of things to work his way through college."

"And so you decided to follow D. Webster's example, did you?" laughed Carlton.

"Yes," replied Simeon, unaware of the quizzical expression on his companion's face. "He has been a great inspiration to me. I decided that if he could work his way through college, I could do it too."

"Are you going to work your way through school too?"

"You're right, I am. I have a scholarship, and one of the teachers, Mr. Child, has promised to give me one dollar and fifty cents a week just for taking care of his horse and cow."

Carlton looked with a new interest at the strange boy before him. Perhaps in his heart there was a feeling of respect which was stronger than that of the amusement which previously had influenced him. The uncouth, ungainly, awkward, self-confident newcomer might after all have certain elements in his make-up that would make him a force in the school. And yet Carlton laughed as he thought of the possibilities of trouble also which were certain to beset the new boy in spite of the fact that he was older than most of the students in the Tait School.

"Are all these fellows in school here?" inquired Simeon, as they met several boys in their walk across the grounds that led to East Hall.

Digitized by Google

"Yes."

"Most of them are dudes, aren't they?" inquired Simeon.

"Why, I don't know," laughed Carlton. "What makes you think they are?"

"Why, they wear derby hats. Up in Springtown any fellow that wears a derby hat is called a dude."

"You won't see many hats around here by tonight."

"Why not?"

"Most of the fellows wear caps, or go bareheaded."

"All winter?" inquired Simeon in surprise.

"Why, yes. What difference does that make?"

"Why, I promised my mother that I wouldn't step a foot outside East Hall in the wintertime without putting a muffler on my neck. She's afraid I'll have consumption."

"I should be afraid I would have it too," said Carlton, laughing, "if I wrapped myself up like an old woman."

"Who's that fellow over there?" demanded Simeon abruptly, pointing as he spoke to a fair-haired, laughing boy, whose glistening teeth were plainly visible, as with outstretched hand he approached. "Hello, Carlton!" exclaimed the newcomer, grasping his friend's hand as he spoke.

"Hello, Adams!" retorted Carlton.

"Why don't you call me by my real name?"

Digitized by Google

demanded Adams, the smile becoming more manifest as he looked quizzically at Carlton's companion.

"What is your name now? What is the latest?" laughed Carlton.

"I have a classical cognomen now," laughed Adams, his white teeth glistening still more plainly.

"What is it?"

"Anceps."

"What does that mean?" asked Carlton.

"It means double-headed."

"What do you mean by that? Two-faced?"

"No," replied Adams, laughing loudly. "It seems some of the fellows think I changed my mind too often. The word means 'doubtful.' I don't object to the name——"

"I guess it wouldn't do you any good if you did," replied Carlton.

"Who's your friend?" asked Adams, glancing at the lanky third member of the party.

"My name is Simeon Galusha Perkins," spoke up the newcomer promptly. "What is yours?"

"I just told you that the boys call me Anceps."

"Yes, but what does your mother call you?"

"My full name," replied Adams, again showing his glistening teeth as he spoke, "is Benjamin Franklin."

"Perkins is going to change his name too, later on," suggested Carlton good-naturedly.

"No, I'm not," spoke up Perkins promptly. "I'm not ashamed of my name."

Digitized by Google

"It's going to be D. Webster the second, isn't it?" inquired Carlton. "You're something of an orator, aren't you?"

"I don't know as I'd call it that exactly, but I can speak pieces."

"You'll have a chance to show what you can do pretty soon," broke in Adams. "Any new men for the team this fall?" he added as he turned to Carlton.

"Of course there will be some new men," replied Carlton, who was the captain of the football team. "There's got to be. Since old Dan Richards and Walter and some of the other fellows have graduated we have simply got to turn out some new material."

"You're president of the league this year, aren't you?"

"President of what league?" inquired Perkins quickly.

"Oh, it's a school league," explained Carlton. "Half a dozen schools in this part of the State have joined together in athletics and made a league in baseball, football, track athletics, hockey, and tennis."

"I'm afraid I sha'n't have much time for those things," said Perkins soberly. "If I take care of a horse and cow and do some other work besides my lessons, I'm afraid I shall be pretty busy. Still, it doesn't take me very long to learn my lessons, and perhaps I'll be able to help you out."

Digitized by Google

"That's kind of you," said Anceps seriously, his glistening teeth belying his mock expression. "I'd like to see you with a football tucked under your arm speeding down the field. How much do you weigh?" he added abruptly.

"One hundred and twenty-three pounds," replied Perkins promptly.

"How tall are you?"

"Six feet and a half an inch."

"In your stockings?"

"I don't know what you mean," replied Perkins soberly. "Of course I wear stockings."

"That's all right, I thought quite likely you did," said Adams with a laugh.

"Here's East Hall," said Carlton, as the boys approached the oldest building in the Tait School.

"You'll have to take care of your own fires, sweep your own room, unpack your things, scrub the floors, hang your own pictures, and do various other things if you room in East," said Adams.

"I expect to do all those things," replied Perkins. "I sha'n't be the first man that's had to do such things to work his way through school and college."

"Why, who ever did that besides D. Webster?"

"Most of the great men have," replied the new boy solemnly.

"And you expect to join the band?"

"What band?"

"Oh, the band of the world's great and good," laughed Adams.

Digitized by Google

"If I didn't mean to do that, I shouldn't have come to this school," said Perkins sharply.

"Good for you! Good for you!" laughed Adams. "When you get to be President, I hope you'll remember some of us poor chaps who have not been fortunate enough to have to take care of Pa Child's cow."

"I wish you boys would come up and help me settle my room," said Perkins, as his companions prepared to leave him at the entrance to the venerable building.

For a moment the two boys glanced at each other blankly, and then Adams said: "Come on, Carl, let's give him a lift. He's a rare bird in the Tait School."

"All right," laughed Carlton good-naturedly, and the boys at once followed the newcomer as he led the way up the stairs toward the third floor.

When the boys entered the room they found that the belongings of their new classmate had been placed in a promiscuous pile in the middle of the floor. There was an antiquated horsehair trunk, a carpetbag, which looked as if it might have belonged to the great-grandfather of the present Perkins, and a few other possessions equally out of date.

The delight of Adams was great as he removed his coat, preparatory to entering into the task which he considered more or less of a joke. Carlton followed his example, and in brief time the earthly possessions of Simeon Galusha were properly distributed.

Digitized by Google

If the two boys, whose circumstances in life were more fortunate, had looked upon the task as more or less of a joke when they began, the revelation of the poverty of their classmate was such that the hearts of both were somewhat touched. The contrast between the room in which they now were standing and the rooms which they occupied was so marked as to be painful. Carlton's heart was so large and his feelings so generous that the quaintness of Perkins' personal belongings and the scarcity of furniture and other objects that would make the room attractive and homelike appealed to him for sympathy more than for ridicule.

Anceps, however, was scarcely able to repress his feelings of delight.

"Go slow, Anceps," whispered Carlton.

"I can't, I can't," laughed Adams; "this is the richest find I've ever made since I've been in the Tait School. It makes me hug myself to think that fellow Perkins is the head of it. Can you sing?" he abruptly demanded as he turned to the occupant of the room.

"Yes," replied Perkins promptly. "I sing and I write songs. If you fellows will wait a minute I'll sing you one that I wrote the other day. It's about a whangdoodle."

"About a which?"

"A whangdoodle."

"Just explain yourself. Is that something good to eat, or is it something you wear?"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

PREPARATIONS

"THE whangdoodle," began Perkins, his long face being expressionless, "is a mythical animal that lived centuries ago. It is supposed to be a combination of the rhinoceros, a mole, and a genus homo. Its feelings were as tender as those of a woman. It is difficult for me to repeat the poem which I wrote upon the great loss that came to this mythical beast, but I'll do my best." Staring at the ceiling and in a voice about an octave below the proper pitch, by which he evidently thought he was singing bass, he began:

> "The whangdoodle mourneth for its firstborn,
> Out in the dewy fields forlorn,
> From coming night to rising morn,
> Alas and alack, he never came back——"

"Stop that! Stop that!" broke in Adams, scarcely able to speak. Indeed, both Carlton Hall and his companion broke into shouts of laughter that were heard out on the campus and caused another classmate, named Field, to run hastily up the stairs of East Hall and enter the room where the three boys were assembled.

Digitized by Google

"What's all this?" he demanded breathlessly, as he stared first at one of the boys and then at another.

"It's a most touching solo," replied Adams, tears streaming down his face as he spoke. "Our friend Perkins has brought his baggage, his voice, and his talents to the Tait School. Sing for him, Perk. Sing it again, man," he added, turning to the new boy as he spoke.

Instantly throwing back his head, Perkins once more began to sing:

"The whangdoodle mourneth for its firstborn,
Out in the dewy fields forlorn,
From coming night to rising morn,
Alas and alack, he never came back——"

The strange part of the performance was that not a smile appeared upon his face in spite of the hilarious applause of his audience.

"Come on, Anceps, we must be going. Unless," Carlton added as he turned toward Perkins, "there is something else we can do for you?"

"I guess there isn't anything more just now," replied Perkins, his face still expressionless. "Maybe a little later I'll ask you to give me a lift. When do the lessons start?"

"To-morrow," replied Carlton.

"Do you have to recite to-morrow?" inquired Perkins in surprise.

"No; the classes meet to-morrow, and the lessons

Digitized by Google

are given out, and the next day we start in with a bang."

"Maybe I'll come over and get you fellows to show me a little how you recite here. I have been out of school the past five or six years, and it may be that I'll be a little bit green."

"Oh, no!" broke in Adams, "not in the least. Not in any wise. You'll be leading the class before the term is half out."

"Not so soon as that," said Perkins, shaking his head soberly.

"Come on out of this place," shouted Adams, seizing Carlton by the arms and pushing him into the hall. "If you want to save my life get me out of this room."

When the three boys had departed Adams once more said: "I'm wondering what will happen to that fellow before two weeks have gone."

"He'll have his troubles," said Field. "I speak from experience. My mother sent me up here because I needed contact with other boys. At least that's what she said when she brought me here."

"You got it, didn't you?" laughed Adams.

"I certainly did. I shall never forget my first night here, when you and Fletcher came into my room and upset the bed, scattering all the things around the room. I thought I would leave the next day, but——"

"But you're glad you stayed," broke in Carlton with a laugh.

Digitized by Google

"Of course I am. But the experience wasn't the pleasantest one at the time that I have ever gone through."

"That's all right," broke in Adams. "What you went through, Field, is not to be compared for a minute with what our musical comedy will learn. He certainly is the worst I ever saw. Whatever possessed him to come here, anyway?"

"It's strange," said Carlton, "but once in a while there's a fellow who comes up here who wants to get an education. He may be mistaken, but he has the idea that they furnish such things in the school."

"It all depends on what you mean by an education. A fellow learns a little Latin, a small bit of mathematics, French, and physics, that will help pass his entrance exams, but all those make up a mighty small part of what a fellow meets in the Tait School. You know, I'm sorry for this fellow Perkins. He's been saving up his money to get what he calls an education, but you might as well try to educate a mule," said Adams.

"How do you know that?" laughed Field.

"Oh, I know a lot of things and some things besides. You might have guessed that before this; you have known me long enough."

"Where is Olmsted?" demanded Carlton, as he turned into the pathway that led toward South Hall, in which he had his room.

"I don't know," replied Adams. "You are

Digitized by Google

captain of the football team; you ought to know where he is if anybody does. He has been up here for two weeks before the term opened trying to coach the fellows that were here."

"I guess I know that," retorted Carlton. "I had to leave home ten days before either of you did. What I want is to see him now. This new fellow thinks he can play football——"

"Oh, don't! Don't! Don't expose him to that!" broke in Adams. "He will never come out alive."

"I'm not so sure," said Carlton slowly. "You can't most always sometimes tell. Now take your own case, Anceps. I thought you would make a good quarter-back, but you didn't stick to it long enough to win out."

"He never does," broke in Field. "He wanted me to room with him this year, and I half promised to; but before I wrote him whether I would or not, I got a letter from him saying he decided to take a single room, and now I hear he has doubled up with Sissy Stewart."

"Don't you remember what Sissy said to us one time?"

"Indeed I do," replied Field feelingly. "I remember what he said to us several times."

"Oh, I know, but one particular time he told us that Emerson or Dan Webster or George Washington said that 'Consistency was the virtue of a small mind.' My mind is not small, I would have you know."

Digitized by Google

With a laugh the boys separated, each departing for his own room.

When Carlton Hall opened the door into his sitting-room, he saw seated in the easy chair, with his feet resting on the window-sill, his classmate Fletcher. No boy in the Tait School was more popular than Carlton's visitor.

Unusually tall, slight without being slender, wiry, and muscular, his chief characteristic was the expression which was ever present on his face. Leaving his chair and advancing toward his classmate he shouted, "Hello—o—o, Carlton! I'm glad to see you."

"You're not half as glad as I am to see you," retorted Carlton, returning the pressure of his friend's hand and gazing into his face with an expression not unlike that of his visitor. "Sit down a minute, you're just the fellow I wanted to see."

"You needn't think you're going to check me for a minute. I'm going to stay here until suppertime. Now tell me, what's on your mind?"

"I've just come from the room of a new fellow named Perkins."

"Well, you might do worse things than that," laughed Fletcher.

"I'm not so sure," replied Carlton. "This fellow is not merely Perkins, but he is Simeon Galusha Perkins, as well."

"Sounds bad, doesn't it?" said Fletcher soberly.

"It doesn't sound half as bad as it looks," re-

Digitized by Google

plied Carlton. "What do you think of a new boy who gets two fellows into his room and sings them a song which he wrote himself?"

"That's pretty bad, but he'll be cured of that distemper very soon."

"I'm not so sure," said Carlton, shaking his head. "This is the most unique specimen I have ever seen. He's working his way through school taking care of Pa Child's horse and cow. Again I say, I'm not so sure."

"You seem quite impressed with this new fellow."

"I am not only impressed, I'm scared."

"For what?"

"For him. He's such a mark that every fellow in the school will be tempted to give him one."

"Pompous, is he?"

"That's no name for it. He's pompous, conceited, opinionated, elongated——"

"And will be disintegrated?"

"Honestly, Fletcher, I don't know what that fellow came here for. He hasn't any money, and I don't believe he has any brains, and yet it seems he has got it into his head that he can get an education here. It's a good deal as Adams says, you might as well try to educate a mule as educate some fellows."

"Does he know that he doesn't know?"

"No, and that's the most hopeless part of it. Now Captain Dan——"

Digitized by Google

"Never mind Captain Dan," interrupted Fletcher with a laugh. "I know your opinion of him. I guess every fellow in the Tait School knows what you think of Dan Richards."

"They all think the same thing," retorted Carlton quickly. "Dan was one of the best fellows we ever had. Now he had to work his way through school, and there was some use in his doing it, but for a chap like this fellow Perkins, who thinks he—why, it's unthinkable. And the nerve of the fellow is sublime. Why, he even asked Adams and me to come up and help him arrange his belongings in his room in East Hall."

"If you don't look out, Carlton, you'll be working, the first thing you know," laughed Fletcher. "Work is dangerous for some fellows. It makes them perspire, and when they perspire the pores of their epidermis become opened and there is a possibility of taking cold. The cold prepares the ground of the soul for pneumonia, and pneumonia prepares for another world. You see how easy is the 'Descent to Avernus'?"

"All the same," declared Carlton positively, "somehow I feel sorry for this fellow. I wish some one would tell him to go back to the mill, where he belongs. He thinks he is going to be a second Dan Webster."

"I must be going," said Fletcher. "I think I'll go over and take a look at this specimen."

"Don't go near him! Don't!" laughed Carlton.

Digitized by Google

"Take my word for it, he'll keep. I want to talk over the plans for the team with you."

"Haven't you got your plans all made?"

"Not all of them. I've been talking with Olmsted, and I think he's going to be the best coach the school has had in years. He's pretty well up on the game, and he looks as if he has plenty of ginger."

"That's what we need," broke in Fletcher.

"Of course we need it. But he knows the coach of the Military Academy too."

"What of that?"

"Why, much of it. He'll deal all right with him, but at the same time he knows the general style of the game he plays. Of course what he plays is what he'll teach the boys. They'll learn what he teaches, and what they learn is what we'll have to meet. According to my understanding, the championship of the league really lies between us and the Academy."

"What do you propose to do?"

What plans may have been in Carlton's mind were not expressed at the time, for there was a sudden interruption as the door was opened and Perkins darted in.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

A CRY FOR HELP

BEFORE either of the occupants of the room could speak Perkins shouted, "Look at me! Just look at me, will you?"

"I am looking," replied Carlton.

"Just look at me," repeated Perkins. "My best suit is soaked through. Some bad boy has spoiled my new clothes."

There was something pathetic in the plaint, and for a moment Carlton Hall was aware of a side of life which not often was presented to him. He had a momentary vision of the long, wearisome labors of the new boy, whose money had been earned by his own efforts, and doubtless every penny which had been invested in the new suit had cost him time and anxiety.

And the plight of the newcomer was manifest. What had happened to him both Carlton and his visitor fully understood. One of the never-ending pranks, particularly in the early part of the school year, was that of dousing with a pail of water, poured from a second or third-floor window, some unsuspecting passer-by. The mark which Perkins had presented had evidently been too tempting for

Digitized by Google

" 'Just look at me, will you ?' "

Page 30

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

some of the boys, and the full contents of a pail had been poured upon his unsuspecting head and explained the wobegone appearance which he now presented.

"It's too bad," said Fletcher soothingly. "But you must not forget that you're not the first fellow who has been soused. I got it three times within as many minutes the first day I was in school. I was walking past one of the buildings, and I got a whole pailful before I knew what had happened. I ran into the hallway, and when I came out the other end of it I got another pailful. I didn't know which way to turn then, so I ran around a corner of the building, but before I could get away the third pail caught me right on the top of the head." Fletcher was laughing good-naturedly, but his words of comfort had slight effect upon the angry and excited visitor.

"That's a great way to treat a fellow," exclaimed Perkins. "I've got only one other suit of clothes, and if they soak that I don't know what I'll do."

"I'll lend you some of mine," laughed Carlton. "Now let me tell you, Perk, the only thing for you to do is to take this in a good-natured way."

"Good-natured! Good-natured!" retorted Perkins, as he glanced ruefully at his dripping garments.

"That's what I said," interrupted Carlton. "It's the only way out. If the fellows find that they can bother you they'll keep it up, but if you don't pay any attention to them they'll quit pretty soon and

Digitized by Google

give their attention to some other fellow that needs it more than you do."

"I don't need it and I won't stand it," exclaimed Perkins. "I didn't come up here to have my clothes ruined. I've had to work hard for everything I have got, and I want to work in school."

"That's all right," said Fletcher, somewhat touched by the feeling of the new boy, and perhaps not unmindful of the justice of his complaint. "We're telling you only what's for your own good."

"I saw the fellow that did it," exclaimed Perkins, his anger unabated.

"Who was it?" inquired Carlton.

"I don't know his name, but he is a little, red-headed, fat fellow——"

"Probably Redhead Price," suggested Carlton. "He's the imp of the school. If you get him down on you you'll have no peace. He isn't a bad fellow, but he's the very incarnation of mischief."

"He's not going to play any of his pranks on me. I'll give him fair warning about that," declared Perkins, shaking his fist as he spoke to emphasize his determination.

"You'll make a mistake," said Carlton warningly. "We have told you the only thing for you to do."

"Do you suppose I'm going to sit still and let those fellows pour pailfuls of water over me? I've got some sense, if you fellows haven't. He'll get his reward, or I'll know the reason why."

"Don't kill him," warned Fletcher.

Digitized by Google

"I sha'n't," replied Perkins soberly. "But I'll teach him a lesson that isn't marked out in the catalogue."

"Redhead needs a lesson all right," acknowledged Carlton, "but my strong advice to you is, pay no attention to what has happened."

"And just let him ruin my new suit?" inquired Perkins, as he spread his hands before him and looked down once more at his dripping garments.

"That's right."

"No, sir. I'll never do that while wood grows and water runs."

"What can we do to help you?" inquired Fletcher.

"I don't know. I don't know why I came over here, but some one told me this was your room, and I was so mad that I started without knowing just where I was going."

"Go back to your room and keep quiet."

"I'm going back to my room, but I'm not going to keep quiet. That red-haired boy is going to suffer for this."

"He won't suffer half as much as you'll suffer if you try to pay the little imp back."

"We'll see about that," said Perkins confidently, as at last he turned away from the room and departed toward his dormitory.

After the departure of their visitor both Carlton and Fletcher were unable to hold back their laughter. The wobegone appearance of the new

Digitized by Google

boy, the fact that what he had described was more or less a common event in the school life, the anger of the innocent sufferer, and his wild declarations of revenge, all combined to emphasize the ludicrous aspect he had presented when he had bounded so unexpectedly into the room.

"You said you didn't think he'd learn much from books," suggested Fletcher at last.

"Perhaps he won't, but there will be some things he will learn and a few others too, I guess, and they'll do him a world of good. I wonder," continued Carlton, "how long that senseless trick of pouring water out of a window on some fellow passing below has been played here."

"I guess it began in the year one," said Fletcher. "It seems to be a part of human nature, and the sooner the fellow learns to adjust himself to what he's got to meet, the better it will be for him and all concerned. I learned that lesson last summer when my report came home."

"What do you mean?" inquired Carlton.

"I happened to be in the library when my father received my report from the school. It wasn't just where I wanted to be, but I couldn't very well leave then, so I watched him while he read it all through and waited for him to say something."

"Well, he said it, didn't he?" laughed Carlton.

"No, he didn't, and that was the worst part of it. He just looked up at me over his glasses and I felt that I had to say something, so I asked him,

Digitized by Google

'That's all right, isn't it, pop? There isn't anything the matter with my report, is there?' 'That all depends,' my father said quietly. 'If this is the best you can do, I haven't anything more to say.' You see, I had a B in Latin, a C in English, and a D in math. As a report it wasn't a howling success, and yet I thought I deserved a little more than my father was inclined to give me, so I said to him, 'You don't want me to be just a grind, do you?' 'What I want,' he said, 'is for you to learn how to do your work well. If you're doing the best you know how, I have no fault to find, but it does strike me that you're not overexerting yourself.' Then I called attention to some of the other fellows, like Anceps, and Sissy Stewart, and some of the other chaps who had conditions, or who had flunked out, and then I proudly called his attention to the fact that I did not even have one condition."

"What did he have to say then?"

"Why, he didn't seem to be very deeply impressed by the information, and suggested that I might devote a little more time and labor to the preparation of my lessons, and not suffer very much from the experience."

"These fathers of ours have a way of talking that way to us, I have noticed," laughed Carlton. "What did you say?"

"I think I had the right over him, and I said, 'Now, pop, be honest. Did your father ever say anything like this to you when you were a boy?'"

Digitized by Google

"Of course he didn't," laughed Carlton. "It's a marvel some of those boys ever lived to grow up in those days. They were all such wonders, and the good die young, you know."

"I'll have to own up that my father acknowledged the point, and was honest enough to say that he believed he did recall a few interviews his paternal ancestor had held with him concerning matters not unlike those which were under discussion by us at that time. I tell you, my father is a good sport. And then when I asked him if he thought that his grandfather ever made any suggestions of that kind to my grandfather, concerning his youthful and not overbrilliant offspring, he laughed and said, 'I think we won't continue this discussion.' And then he just put in a word that I sha'n't forget."

"What was it?"

"He just said that he wanted me to be sure to get all that it was possible for me to have while I was in school—not how little, but how much. He didn't say anything against the football team nor any of the other things that cut into the work a little at times, and even you and I will have to acknowledge that much. What he wanted, he said, was just for me to get my brains and habits in working order so that I would be ahead of the game when I was thrown out upon the cold, cold world."

"I guess we could trace that thing clear back to Adam," laughed Carlton, "and I've sometimes

Digitized by Google

thought that our fathers talk to us as they do because they want to make up for some of the mistakes they made when they were boys."

"Of course," said Fletcher, "they wouldn't be doing the right thing by us if they didn't; but honestly, Carl, I've been thinking a good deal of what my father said. The woods are full of little fellows, Jews, Italians, and I don't know what all, who have come over here and haven't had enough money to buy a loaf of bread. Somehow they get along and when they get through school they go for business. They get all the inside that's to be had out of it, and when they leave school and go into business, or study law, or whatever they do, they are getting ahead of the American boys. I tell you, Carlton, we've got to wake up, or we're going to lose out in the game, and honestly I believe that the greatest trouble is due to the fact that just such fellows as you and I, who have every opportunity in the world given us, let the chances slip and think we're getting the better end of the bargain when we do as little as we can instead of as much as we can."

"I don't think that's any joke," said Carlton soberly. "I have been thinking a good deal about the same thing. I've almost got myself up to the point where I'm willing to say that I'll work——"

"What's that?" suddenly interrupted Fletcher, as a shrill cry was heard outside the dormitory.

Rushing to the windows the boys saw the little

Digitized by Google

fellow who was familiarly known by his mates as Redhead Price in the hands of Perkins, who was beating the little lad without mercy.

"We'll have to put an end to that," said Carlton in a low voice, as, seizing his cap, he ran hastily from the building followed by his classmate, who was as strongly aroused as he.

When the two boys ran from their entry in South Hall they discovered that Redhead Price's cries had aroused others besides themselves, and from many directions boys were seen running toward the place where Perkins still was holding and beating the lad who had played the prank upon him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

THE RECRUIT

BEFORE Carlton and his companion arrived at the place they were seeking, a half-dozen or more of the angry boys seized the awkward Perkins and compelled him to let go his hold upon Redhead. The anger of the boys was as great as that of the new student who was venting his wrath upon his tormentor.

Apparently Price was none the worse for his encounter, for he quickly joined in the fray, adding his shouts and blows to those of his companions. Perkins had been thrown upon the ground, and though his assailants were all from the younger boys, they easily were able to hold him in place and administer the punishment which, in their minds at least, he deserved.

At the moment when Carlton arrived upon the scene one of the younger boys, who had fled from the spot when the contest began, now was seen running rapidly to the place struggling under his load of two pails filled with water. One of these was dashed upon the face of the prostrate boy, but before the second could be used Carlton called sharply, "Quit that! What are you trying to do?"

Digitized by Google

"This fellow was pummeling Redhead," explained Clark, one of the young lad's classmates.

Turning sharply to the boys, who were still holding Perkins helpless upon the ground, Carlton sharply said, "Let go! Let him up!"

The young boys hesitated a moment, but the command of the leader of the school was not lightly to be disobeyed.

Reluctantly they released their hold, but the angry Perkins, as he leaped to his feet, immediately began to strike or kick at his youthful tormentors.

"You stop that!" ordered Carlton sternly, as he stood between the angry boy and those whom he was vainly striving to seize.

"Leave me at him!" roared Perkins. "Let me go! I'll show them! Let me get hold of one of them, and I'll——"

What was implied in Perkins' threat was not known because Carlton at that time seized him firmly by the shoulders and flung him back several yards. With difficulty Perkins regained his upright position and then turned sharply upon Carlton. Apparently the bearing and attitude of the latter served to recall the excited boy to himself. At all events he stepped back, and though his face was still flushed and a strange light was in his eyes, he nevertheless did not offer any more violence.

"That's great business for a fellow of your size to be fighting these little chaps," said Carlton scornfully. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Digitized by Google

"Do you think I'm going to keep quiet and let those little imps pour water over me from every window? Why, I hadn't left your room two minutes before some one threw another pail of water over me."

"If you don't stop such behavior as you have been trying now," declared Carlton, "your troubles have only begun. The best thing you can do is to go straight to your room. I'll see that these little fellows leave you alone for the night. I sha'n't promise what may happen to you to-morrow."

"What right have you got to tell me where to go? Anybody would think you were the——"

"You either go to your room, or I'll let the whole pack of these boys loose on you," interrupted Carlton. He spoke in a low voice, and apparently was not at all aroused by the taunts of the new boy.

For a moment Perkins stared blankly at his schoolmate, and then apparently thinking better of his previous determination, left the place, walking slowly along the pathway which led to his dormitory.

His departure was greeted with a derisive shout from the angry boys, whose numbers by this time had been greatly increased.

Angered again by the taunt, Perkins turned abruptly and for a moment looked as if he was about to renew his persecution of his tormentors. A glance, however, at Carlton Hall somehow caused him to reconsider his purpose, and though he was still followed by the taunting cries he did not once

Digitized by Google

glance behind him before he entered East Hall and disappeared from sight.

On their way back to their room Fletcher said to Carlton: "That fellow acts as if he was crazy. What's the matter with him, anyway?"

"It's all new and strange to him," answered Carlton "School customs or traditions do not mean anything to him. He has never had any experience with such things. He has come up here with just one idea in his mind, and that is to work the way D. Webster did until he too is able to stand up before the Senate and say, 'Give me liberty or give me death.'"

"It wasn't Webster that said that at all," laughed Fletcher.

"Well, somebody said it, anyway."

"That was Patrick Henry before the House of Burgesses in Virginia. You might have quoted something from Webster's reply to Hayne."

"Bother your quotations," broke in Carlton; "I wonder what I'm going to do to keep Redhead and his gang from making life a burden to Perk. You know I can't help feeling half sorry for the fellow. He has worked hard to get his money, and has come up here to do his best. It does not seem fair that a lot of little hoodlums should be allowed to spoil his work. And they have only begun their mischief. There is no telling what is in store for him."

"You can't furnish brains for him," suggested Fletcher with a laugh. "If he doesn't know enough

Digitized by Google

to see what every fellow ought to know by instinct, he'll have no one to blame but himself."

"Yes, I suppose so," admitted Carlton, "and yet I can't help feeling sorry for him. He's not like the boys here and it isn't any place for him to be, but he has entered and he'll have to make the best of it. If that little redhead gets too lively, I'll take a hand in the matter myself. I guess I'll have to let Perkins fight his own battles and learn to hoe his own row."

"You're a wise man, Carlton," laughed Fletcher, as he and his companion separated to prepare for supper.

When the boys entered the dining-room they were aware of Perkins, who was already standing before the place which had been assigned him at one of the tables. Manifestly he was the center of interest and observation. His "second-best suit," apparently, was no more ornamental than the one which he had been compelled to exchange for it after his experience with the boys who had doused him.

There still was an expression of belligerency in his eyes, and Carlton was aware as he glanced at him that it was only the presence of the teachers, one of whom was seated at the head of each table, that prevented an outburst on his part.

At a signal from the bell all the boys took their seats, and for a time at least they were so busy that even the newcomer ceased to be the topic of conversation.

Digitized by Google

When Perkins departed from the dining-room, Carlton and Fletcher fell in with him as if by chance. Their presence protected the new boy from any open attack that the younger pupils might have planned, and he was conducted safely to his room, although he manifestly was unaware of the purpose of his companions in accompanying him.

The following morning after the chapel exercises the different classes were assembled in their recitation rooms, lessons were assigned, various directions were given, and the boys all were informed that the regular routine of the school would begin the following day.

In the evening study hour Carlton was surprised when Perkins, without rapping upon his door, or in any way waiting to be invited to enter, walked into his room.

"I've come over," he explained, "to get some points on these lessons."

"You have no right to be out of your room in study hour," said Carlton. "If Mr. Reynolds should see you he would give you three marks."

"I guess I'm not so green as you think I am," retorted Perkins. "I asked Mr. Reynolds for permission to come over here, and he told me that I might——"

"That's all right, then," interrupted Carlton. "Now what can I do for you about your lessons?"

"I think I would like to have you go over them with me."

Digitized by Google

For a moment Carlton stared at his visitor and then his evident sincerity in his statement impressed him, and laughing, he said: "We'll study them together. I'm afraid I'm not far enough ahead to give you very many points."

"That's all right," answered Perkins glibly, as he at once seated himself in the easy chair which Carlton had drawn up near his desk preparatory to beginning his evening labors. "What shall we begin with first?" he added.

"Did you ever hear of Lord Chesterfield?" inquired Carlton.

"No; who is he?"

"Why, he was a noted Englishman, who lived a good many years ago, and wrote some essays on deportment and a few other things like that. I don't suppose I should ever have heard of him if my uncle hadn't sent me the book and I didn't dare neglect reading it."

"We don't have to study that, do we?" demanded Perkins.

"No, I don't know that we 'have' to, but it's good reading."

"I'm afraid I sha'n't have any time to read. I want to do what I told you I would."

"What was that?" inquired Carlton.

"Why, don't you remember? You wanted me to go down to the football field with the fellows tomorrow, and I——"

"Oh, yes, I remember now. Of course I remem-

Digitized by Google

ber," broke in Carlton. "But I'm not sure that you will have time for football."

"I've got to have some exercise, and besides that I'm going to show you that I don't forget a favor. I'll go down to-morrow. What time is the game?"

"Oh, there won't be any game to-morrow," explained Carlton. "It's just to practise running back punts and trying out a few formations."

"Is that all?" said Perkins.

It was evident to Carlton that his visitor had no understanding of the meaning of the terms which had been used. His heart smote him and he was on the point of advising him not to report for the football practice, being well aware of some of the experiences that might await him there, when Perkins said abruptly: "Come, let's get to work on this Latin."

"Just as you say," assented Carlton, and for a time both boys were busied in translating the lesson which had been assigned in Cicero's Orations.

It became increasingly and even painfully manifest as the work proceeded that Perkins had very slight conception of the task which had been assigned. His knowledge of the language, at least, as it was read and taught in the Tait School, was exceedingly limited. Throughout the hour, however, Perkins seemed to be unaware of his shortcomings, and Carlton's heart misgave him several times when he thought of what was awaiting the self-confident, awkward boy.

Digitized by Google

Promptly at the appointed hour the following afternoon Perkins appeared on the football grounds. In the dressing-room he was given a suit which he donned.

When Perkins appeared on the grounds he was manifestly pleased with the attention he received, though he did not suspect the source of much of it.

Standing near the side-lines, he watched with interest the work of Carlton, who was punting the ball. Unaware of the special attention he now was receiving from Redhead Price, he did not see that lively youngster, when he on all fours crept up directly behind the interested new boy, and then, before Perkins was aware of what was occurring, another boy pushed him somewhat vigorously over the kneeling form of Redhead. The result was that Perkins' long legs waved for a moment frantically in the air before he turned a somersault and then lay sprawling in the grass.

Scrambling hastily to his feet, almost beside himself with rage, Perkins looked angrily about, but his tormentors now had retreated to a safe distance and danced about, as if they were daring the new boy to pursue them.

Whatever inclination may have been in the mind of Perkins it was lost as Carlton at that moment summoned him with others to the field. Reluctantly Perkins obeyed the call without any suspicion of the experiences that were awaiting him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

WITH THE BALL

THE appearance of the new boy in his uniform, in which Perkins by no means seemed to feel at ease, was a source of delight to the younger boys, who had banded themselves together to induct the awkward boy into the ways and manners of the Tait School. As Carlton looked at him his heart almost smote him. And yet he was aware that to send Perkins back to the side-lines now would be to entrust him once more to the tender mercies of his tormentors. And there was a bare possibility too, that Perkins might be able to display some qualities that would make him of use on the football squad. His long legs might be able to develop speed, and his thin form might be wiry and muscular. As Carlton looked again at his companion he was by no means positive that he was doing a kindness to his new classmate.

"At all events," he said to himself, "I'll keep him away from Redhead's gang for a little while, and maybe the fellow will be able to get his eyes open so that he can see some things as they really are."

"You stay here on the thirty-five-yard line," he

Digitized by Google

said to Perkins. "Olmsted and two or three more of us are going behind the goal-post to punt. When the ball comes anywhere near you, you start for it. Let me give you two or three pointers. Catch the ball in this way," he explained, as he showed the awkward, but now apparently willing learner, how to hold and fold his arms, and also how to make his start as he ran toward the ball.

In the work that followed, after one or two attempts in which he slipped and fell, Perkins acquitted himself so well as to receive a word of commendation from Olmsted. The coach's praise was seldom given, and instantly Perkins arose in the estimation of his comrades when Olmsted singled him out for approbation.

"We're going to try two or three formations now," said Carlton a little later, as the punting ceased. "We sha'n't do much except try to run them out."

"What do you want me to do?" inquired Perkins.

"Just what I tell you," laughed Carlton good-naturedly. "I'm the captain of the team, and what I say goes. I want to find out whether you can run or not. You have plenty of nerve, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Perkins confidently.

"Well, you'll have a chance to show it now. We're going to try just one or two formations, and I'm going to give you a chance to see what you can do in running with the ball."

"The football?"

Digitized by Google

"Why, of course," laughed Carlton. "What do you think?"

"Why, I thought the football was to be kicked."

"There's a time to kick and a time to run," laughed Carlton. "What I want you to do now is just simply to take the ball in your arms this way and run toward the line and see if you can find a place where you can break through it. The fellows on the line will try to stop you, but you must hug the ball tight and hang to it even after they have downed you."

Carlton was not aware that the face of his companion was expressive of the confusion he felt, as he heard these mysterious directions. Indeed, the captain of the team, familiar with every phase and phrase of the game, had no conception of the ignorance of the boy to whom he was talking. There had been no games in his life. Long hours in the mill had left scant time for recreation. In the evenings in the humble home in which he dwelt with his widowed mother, where the problem of existence was ever present and always difficult of solution, he had spent his time trying to study. An occasional word of help from a young lawyer in the village had been his sole assistance. It was simply impossible for Carlton, coming as he did from a home where every want was supplied, to understand what such privations meant. Carlton was generous-hearted, popular among his mates, a fair student, and such a successful athlete that now he had

Digitized by Google

become the successor of Captain Dan Richards, as the leader in the sports of Tait School. So much of his time and conversation had been given to the work of the school athletic games, and to the problems that arose from membership in the league of six schools, that the young captain simply was ignorant of the ignorance of a boy who had been brought up in such surroundings as Simeon Galusha Perkins had enjoyed.

Patiently Carlton explained to the new boy the duties that now devolved upon him. He pointed out the very place in the line he was to occupy, and how he was to change the place when the signal was given. The ball was then to be passed to him, and Perkins was to run, helped by the interference which would be given him. If an opening was made in the opposing line, then he must instantly strive to run or crawl through it.

Still Perkins' face betrayed no understanding. Perhaps he was afraid to confess his ignorance. At all events, when the young captain completed his directions, and, as he fancied, explained everything in such detail that any boy would understand what was desired, Carlton then turned to his place in the opposing line, and the formations were at once called for.

"One — three — five — seven — thirty — nine —fourteen—twelve—ten." Suddenly the ball was snapped back and passed directly to Perkins. He was not ready, however, to receive it, and the ball

Digitized by Google

struck him in the chest and bounded back upon the ground.

"Try it again," called the coach. "Don't stand there like a block," he said sharply to Perkins. "A wooden Indian in front of a cigar store has more life in him than you have. Wake up, man. Grab your ball and run."

"Where shall I run?" inquired Perkins, unmoved by the rebuke.

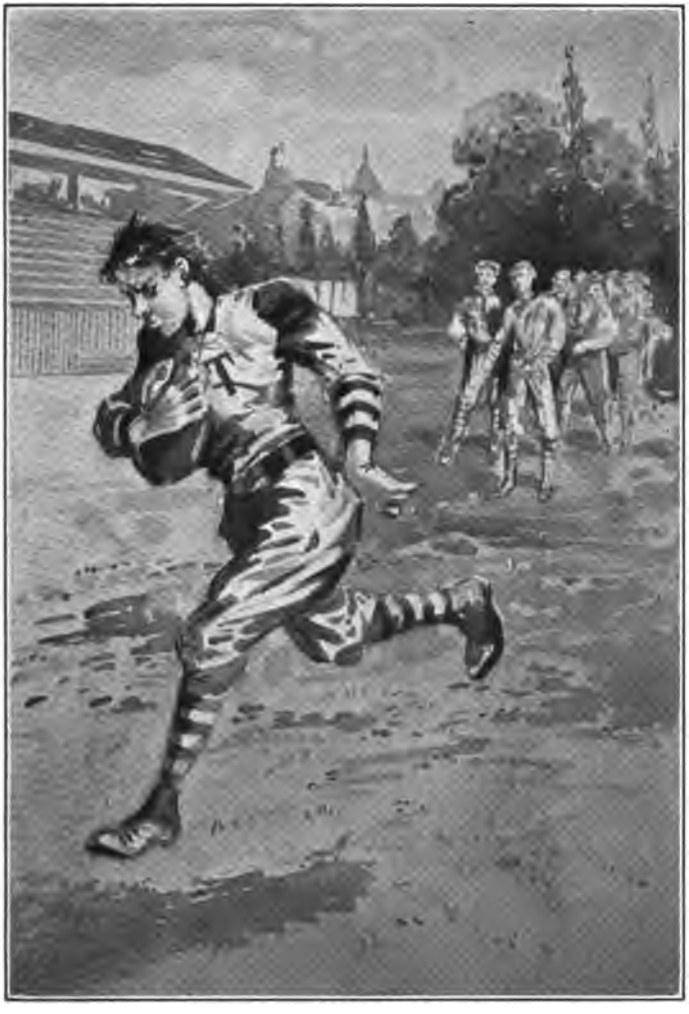
"Anywhere you can find an opening," retorted Olmsted, as the other boys laughed.

Again the signals were given. Once more the ball was snapped back. This time Perkins seized it in his arms, and then to the incredulous delight of all who were watching the practice he turned abruptly and, instead of approaching the line before him, fled at his utmost speed toward the goal-post far behind him. Not a player was in front of him, and the laughing yell that followed served to increase the speed at which Perkins was covering the field. His height enabled him to take long strides, but his movements were so awkward and his form was bent in such a peculiar way that shouts of delight arose from all the beholders.

"I done it. I mean I did it!" exclaimed Perkins, as he stopped when he had passed the goal-post and turned to face Olmsted, who was running swiftly toward him.

"Yes, I think you did it. If you had kept on around the world you would have brought up near

Digitized by Google



"He fled at his utmost speed"

Page 52

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

the place where you ought to go. Why did you run this way?"

"You told me to run 'anywhere,'" retorted Perkins.

For a moment the coach stared blankly at the new boy and then laughed brutally. "Have you room for one little idea in your cranium?" he inquired.

"I certainly have."

"Well, then hold fast to this: You're to run when the ball is given you toward the goal-post behind the line that is in front of you, not toward the posts that are behind you."

"But those fellows in front of me will stop me."

"They'll try to," said the coach demurely, "but if you can once get past them and make your feet move as fast as you did just now when you were running in the wrong direction, they won't be able to overtake you. Now I'm going to give you one more chance. If you don't make good now, we shall have to try some one else."

Unmindful of the derisive cries that arose from Redhead's band of followers, who were watching from the side-line, Perkins, after the signals were repeated once more, received the ball.

This time he started in the correct direction. Behind him and on every side were his comrades, who were trying to carry out the formation which had been planned.

To his surprise the men on either side of him tried

Digitized by Google

apparently to get in his way. They were close to him, so close now that he was hampered by their presence. He looked wildly for the 'opening' to which both Olmsted and Carlton had referred, but no opening appeared. Hesitating a moment to decide what was the proper thing to do, before he was aware of what had occurred he felt himself vigorously seized and thrown to the ground. What seemed a wild mass of legs and arms and bodies were piled upon him, and the ball was forcibly torn from his grasp.

When the mass was untangled, Perkins, his face livid with rage, breathing with difficulty because the heavy bodies had almost squeezed the breath from his lungs, angrily faced Carlton and shouted, "You did that! You're to blame!"

"Of course I am," replied Carlton, joining in the laugh that arose, as every boy stopped and mirthfully gazed at the excited player. "That's what we're here for."

"To hurt me?" roared Perkins. "Everybody jumped on me."

"That's all in the game," explained Carlton quietly.

"You'd better not try it again."

"No, I don't think we had," acknowledged the young captain, as he nodded at Olmsted. "I think you'll learn more for a little while if you'll go to the side-lines."

"I'm going to my room."

Digitized by Google

"Oh, don't give up yet," suggested Carlton. "You made good time when you were running toward the wrong goal. If you can make such speed as that when you're traveling toward the other fellow's goal you may make the team yet."

Perkins shook his head, apparently still mystified by all this talk which was strange or new to him, and slowly walked toward the dressing-room.

"The fellow's as green as grass," said Olmsted, as the boys turned about preparatory to resuming practice. "He simply doesn't know anything about the game."

"And he never will," said Carlton. "When I saw what time he could make I thought possibly he might be able to do something, but——"

"Oh, he may yet," broke in Olmsted.

"You can't tell. He simply doesn't know what a football is when he sees one, but he may be able to learn. I wish he would stay here and watch the practice for a little while. I think we took too much for granted, and gave him more than we ought to have done at first."

Again Carlton called to the departing Perkins, but the lad was unmoved by the appeal and ignored also the taunting cries of Redhead and his companions. His dignity had been assailed. Manifestly he believed that he had been "downed," not because the feat was a part of the game, but was an intentional slight. The angered boy was positive that he would no longer submit to such insults.

Digitized by Google

As Perkins soon disappeared from sight, Carlton joined his companions and turned to the field. Not one of them was aware of the feeling that raged in the heart of Simeon Galusha. Disappointment, mortification, a feeling of injustice, all were combined, and it aroused his resentment to a pitch which the captain of the Tait football team simply could not comprehend.

With the departure of the new boy from the field the practice was resumed, and nearly two hours had elapsed when Carlton returned to his room.

As he entered he saw a note upon his desk. He took up the paper and read the words which had been written upon it. Instantly his air of indifference departed and, delaying simply long enough to reread the startling words, at his utmost speed he fled from his room.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

THE WOES OF PERK

THE note which Carlton had found awaiting him read as follows:

"Come over to my room as soon as ever you can. I am in trouble. I think I shall go home. I won't stand for this any longer.

"SIM. GAL. PERKINS."

Puzzling as the statement was, and inclined to laugh as Carlton was when he first read the note of the boy who had perplexed him more than any other who had come since he had first entered the Tait School, nevertheless he was so genuinely kind-hearted that in a moment the troubles of Perk appealed strongly to him. Besides, Carlton was not unaware of the influence which he possessed as the leader of the school. He recalled experiences in the preceding years, when as a homesick little fellow he had first entered the school, and had been subjected himself to troubles as numerous, if not as disagreeable, as those which now were being visited upon Perkins.

He thought also of the help which Captain Dan Richards had given him, and of the feeling he cher-

Digitized by Google

ished in his heart toward the captain of the school nine. It was a source of pride now to realize that, in a measure at least, he was occupying the position once held by the boy for whom his admiration and affection were almost unlimited.

Passing quickly from South Hall, Carlton, without delaying, at once walked to East Hall and, climbing the stairs to the third floor, rapped noisily upon the door of the room occupied by Simeon Galusha. His summons at first was either not heard, or ignored, and Carlton was startled when he fancied that he heard something that sounded very much like a sob coming from the inner room.

Startled by the unexpected sound he turned the knob, but discovered that the door was locked. Again he rapped sharply and called, "Let me in, Perk!"

There was a sound of approaching footsteps, but before the key was turned his classmate inquired, "Who's there?"

"Carl Hall. You left a note for me to come to your room."

Slowly the key was turned and the door cautiously was opened. Apparently Perkins was by no means positive that his visitor was the boy whose name had been given. However, he opened the door as soon as he was convinced that it was indeed Carlton who was before him, and the senior quickly entered the room. Before he was seated, however, Perkins hastily relocked the door.

Digitized by Google

"What are you doing that for?" laughed Carlton a trifle uneasily, for he was moved more than he cared to acknowledge by the grief-stricken face of the boy before him.

"I'm going to keep everybody out."

"What's wrong?"

"Everything's wrong," replied Perkins, his voice trembling as he spoke.

"Tell me about it," said Carlton, deeply touched by the trouble of his classmate.

"I think I shall go home."

"Oh, don't do that. Tell me all about it. What's wrong?"

"Everything's wrong, as I told you. I thought this was a place where I could get a good preparation for college."

"It is," interrupted Carlton.

"No, it isn't. I can't study. The boys are playing tricks on me all the time. I guess they don't understand how long I have been working, and what it means for me to come here. Or else," he added bitterly, "they don't care."

"Go on," said Carlton in a low voice.

"They're playing tricks on me all the time. Everything I do is wrong. And I don't get along in the classes the way I ought to. Even Sissy—I think that's what you called him—tried to make fun of me. He says things to me that he doesn't say to any other boy in the class. You too," Perkins exclaimed and then stopped abruptly.

Digitized by Google

There was a moment of awkward silence in the room, which was broken at last by Carlton saying kindly: "Well, what have I done? I thought I was trying to smooth things off for you."

"And you say that, after what happened down on the football field this afternoon?" exclaimed Perkins, his eyes flashing as he spoke.

"Of course I say it," retorted Carlton. "The trouble was, I thought you knew more than you do."

"What do you mean?" The old Perkins was beginning to assert himself now, and Carlton's sympathy was more or less relieved, as he became aware of the change in the voice and manner of the troubled boy before him.

"Why, you laughed when I did what I did on the field this afternoon, and yet I was doing just exactly what you told me."

"But you don't know anything about the game," explained Carlton good-naturedly. "I thought you did. The mistake was mine. I should have told you more before I let you join the squad. That's my mistake and I'll take all the blame on my own shoulders. Now, then, what else is wrong? Speak up like a man, Perkins, and tell me all about it."

"One of the teachers has just been here," remarked Perkins bitterly.

"What did he want?"

"He told me that I might be expelled."

"Expelled!" exclaimed Carlton. "For what?"

"It seems I poured some water on him. I didn't

Digitized by Google

know he was a teacher. But that little Redhead and his gang have been throwing water on me every time I go out of East Hall. You told me to pay them back the same way, and I thought I would try it. When I came up from the field this afternoon I got soused again before I got into my hall, so after I had gone to my room I decided that I would do what you said. I got a pail of water and waited for one of those fellows to pass under my window. That little Redhead ran out of the hall and I threw the water, but he dodged it, and it struck Mr. Reed right on the top of the head. I didn't know he was coming out of the building," added Perkins soberly.

"And do you mean to say that you doused Mr. Reed?"

"Yes."

"Did you douse him good and plenty?"

"I guess I did. He was wet from head to foot."

The teacher who had encountered this unfortunate experience was one of the most prim and careful members of the teaching force. There was never a wrinkle in his clothing, and every hair of his head was carefully brushed and in place whenever he appeared in his classroom. The work which he required from his boys was of similar character, and the picture which the man presented to Carlton's mind after he had been deluged with the water thrown from Perkins' window was such that the senior laughed loudly and long.

Digitized by Google

His mirth, however, was not shared by his companion, who finally said: "I don't see what there is to laugh at. Mr. Reed came to me and asked me if I did it, and, of course, I had to tell him I did. He wouldn't listen to me when I wanted to explain to him how it happened, and that it was all a mistake. He said that any fellow who threw water from his windows ought to be sent home, and when a boy played such a trick as that upon a teacher he certainly ought to go. I might as well be packing up," groaned Perkins, "though I cannot say that I'm very sorry to go. Everybody is down on me here."

"Don't be a fool," was the somewhat puzzling remark made by Carlton when his companion ceased.

"I'd be a fool to stay here and put up with all this," retorted Perkins, displaying more of his former spirit.

"Let me tell you something," said Carlton kindly. "I've noticed that you've been receiving a little more attention than you need, or at least than you want, from the younger fellows in the school. I'm not upholding them, but you're putting yourself right on a level with them."

"I am?" exclaimed Perkins angrily. "I'd like to know how."

"Because you quarrel with them; and then too, the other day you tried to pitch into a lot of them. You couldn't do a worse thing."

"But they're keeping me from doing the work that I want to do."

Digitized by Google

"They'll keep you more if you pay too much attention to them."

"I guess you would pay attention if you got wet every time you stepped out of your room."

"If I acted the way you do I should expect to," laughed Carlton, and yet his expression was so thoroughly cordial that even Perkins smiled as he looked into the face of his visitor.

"But you yourself told me," protested Perkins, "that I ought to pay them back in their own coin."

"And so I did," acknowledged Carlton. "Did you ever hear that old poem, 'Laugh and the world laughs with you'?"

"What of it?"

"A good deal of it. If you're thrown in with these little imps, don't forget they're a part of the 'world,' and you'll get along all right. Just as soon as they find that they can't torment you they'll stop trying. I know it is hard, and it sounds very bitter, but the school isn't much different from the world outside. Indeed, my mother sent me here because she thought I would learn more quickly here just how to meet the world. I had as many or more troubles than you have had, Perkins, when I first came here. I was not quite so green, but I was almost as conceited as you are, and besides, I was a good deal younger. The school bully used to pound me, and if it hadn't been for Captain Dan Richards I should have been in trouble a good many more times than I was."

Digitized by Google

"Do you mean to tell me," inquired Perkins in amazement, "that they also poured water on you too, when you first came here?"

"They certainly did," laughed Carlton, as if the recollection now was a source of amusement. "They did a good deal more than that too. I don't know how many times, when I crawled into bed, I found that they had poured water there. They had climbed over the transom into my room and stacked my bed."

"What's that?"

"Why, they would upset everything. The bed would be torn apart, my clothes tied in knots, and very likely all the chairs would be on the top of the table. The bed-springs would be in the closet, pictures strung around the floor, and I don't know what all. It wasn't very pleasant, and yet I guess it was what I deserved."

"Do you think I deserve what I'm getting?" demanded Perkins.

"In a way, yes."

"What have I done to deserve it?"

"Perhaps it isn't so much what you have done, as what you didn't do. You put yourself on a level with the youngest boys in the school by quarreling with them. You tell all the fellows you're going to do what D. Webster did. You talk as if you thought you were the brightest fellow in the school. And when you make mistakes you don't own up that they are mistakes."

Digitized by Google

"But I haven't made any mistakes," protested Perkins.

"There you go," exclaimed Carlton, with a laugh. "That's the biggest mistake of all."

"I don't know what you mean."

"That's another thing that makes me almost hopeless about you."

The expression of blank amazement on the face of Perkins was so pathetic in its appeal that Carlton continued: "You see, Perk, it's this way: you aren't used to the ways of other boys, and you've got to learn how to get along with people. If you'll keep your mouth shut tightly and your eyes wide open you'll be a wiser fellow inside of a week. You talk too much. You tell what great things you're going to do."

"But I am," protested Perkins.

"Well, then, you'd better wait until they're done, before you talk very much about them. The fellows won't put up with a brag or a prig."

"I don't know what a prig is, but I know I don't brag. I'm just telling you and the rest of the fellows what I'm here for."

"Don't tell them. They'll find out for themselves. There's another thing, Perkins. There isn't any sense in your dressing the way you do."

"They're the best clothes I can afford," retorted the troubled boy.

"That's all right, but you don't need to comb your hair the way you do. You don't need to hitch your

Digitized by Google

trousers two or three inches above the tops of your shoes. You mustn't eat with your knife."

"I guess all that's my business," said Perkins, angered by the words of his friend.

"That may all be, but if you don't make it your business to change some of these things your troubles have only begun."

"I told you I was going to leave," declared Perkins once more, bitterly.

"Perkins, you've got these things to learn, and the sooner you learn them the better. I'm not talking this way to you because I'm setting myself up, but I've been here longer than you have and I know what kind of a fellow the boys pick out for their pranks. It isn't because you haven't any money. It isn't because you haven't any brains; nobody knows much about that yet. It's just because you won't let yourself fit into the school life."

"The fellows are down on me because I'm poor and have to work my way through, and am taking care of Mr. Child's horse and cow. They don't want anybody here but dudes."

The conversation was interrupted by a rap on the door. In response to Carlton's nod, Perkins rose and cautiously peered out to ascertain who his visitor might be.

"It's Mr. Reed," he exclaimed in a loud whisper to Carlton, and then opened wide the door to admit his caller.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

MR. REED'S VISIT

NODDING slightly to Carlton, whose presence in the room for a moment seemed to irritate the teacher, Mr. Reed turned to Perkins and said: "Perhaps I was a trifle hasty. You acknowledged that you threw the water upon me, but you also wanted to explain. I didn't give you that opportunity. It doesn't seem to me that there can be any explanation, but if you have anything more to say, it's only just for me to listen to you."

As neither boy responded to the implied suggestion, Mr. Reed said sharply, "You threw the water, didn't you?"

"Yes," growled Perkins.

"What made you do it?"

"I didn't know that I was throwing it upon you," the boy answered.

"That makes no difference. You ought not to have thrown it from your window anyway. What made you do it?"

"This boy told me to," replied Perkins, as he pointed to his classmate.

Too astounded to reply to the charge, Carlton gazed in astonishment at his classmate. His face

Digitized by Google

was flushed and his anger apparently had returned in full force.

"Did you tell him to do such a thing as that, Hall?" inquired Mr. Reed sternly.

"No, sir," answered Carlton quietly.

"What do you mean, then?" demanded the teacher, as he turned once more to the boy whom he had accused.

Mr. Reed was one of the most popular teachers in the Tait School. Careful in his work, demanding full measure from every class, he yet was so just in his judgment and so kind in his quiet bearing toward the boys that almost every pupil was proud to win his friendship. Carlton Hall many a time had gone to this teacher when he was in trouble or perplexity, and had never failed to find a sympathetic friend and a helpful word. Indeed, Mr. Reed's hold upon the boys was such that those who had longest been in the school were his most devoted friends. For several years each outgoing senior class had voted him the most popular teacher in the entire corps. To be accused in his presence of inspiring the action of Perkins in drenching the teacher was something Carlton was not prepared to endure.

"I mean what I say," said Perkins tartly.

"But Hall declares that he didn't tell you."

"He did tell me, whether he declares it or not."

"When did I ever tell you such a thing?" demanded Carlton, his face flushing and his anger

Digitized by Google

manifest in the tones of his voice as he turned to his awkward classmate.

"You told me to pay back in their own coin the fellows who were tormenting me. I haven't had a dry suit for two days. Every time I go out the door somebody is waiting up-stairs to pour water all over me. I can just tell you, Mr. Reed, that I'm not going to stand it any longer. I didn't come here to be soaked with water. I want to get an education. Carlton Hall told me the only thing I could do was to get even with these fellows. I didn't know I was throwing water on you. That little Redhead, who's the worst boy I ever saw, has been the ringleader, and he was waiting on the steps, so I poured some water on him. At least I intended to, but before I could do it he was gone and you stepped outside and caught the whole pailful."

"I noticed something of the kind," said Mr. Reed, smiling slightly as he spoke. "I suppose you know it is strictly against the rules of the school to do such a thing."

"If it isn't, it ought to be," spoke up Perkins loudly.

"I think I appreciate the conditions, and I have more sympathy with you than I had before. I shall revoke what I said to you, and I'm sure you'll not let this occur again."

"I sha'n't pour any water on you if I can help it," said Perkins, "but if I can catch that little Redhead, I'll soak him."

Digitized by Google

"If you wait until you catch him, I'm afraid you won't be busy for some time, Perk," laughed Carlton. "But, Mr. Reed," he added, as he turned to the teacher, "I've just been telling Perkins that I think that he ought not to pay too much attention to what has been done to him. There hasn't been anything very bad, but some of the little fellows are inclined to plague and torment him, and I told him the best thing he can do is not to meet them on their own level. I think he must have misunderstood what I said to him——"

"I didn't misunderstand it," broke in Perkins quickly. "I did understand what you said to me, and that was just the reason why I did what I did. Don't you think that is the way to do, Mr. Reed? Don't you think the best way is to resist the devil, and then he will flee from you? That's what my grandmother used to tell me."

"I'm not competent to give you advice, I fear, on that subject," said Mr. Reed dryly. "All I can say is that if you break the rules of the school you'll have to take the consequences, no matter what other boys may have done or have not done. When you get in trouble again, come to me, and I'll try to help you out."

"I think I shall go home," said Perkins seriously. "I can't say that I like it here very well, and I'm very much disappointed. It took me a long time to save money enough to enter the Tait School, and when I come I find that I can't do my work."

Digitized by Google

"Why not?" inquired Mr. Reed kindly.

"One reason is that I have only two suits of clothes, and one of them is wet all the while."

"That's too bad," said the teacher sympathetically. "We shall have to put a stop to that. Is there any other reason why you want to go home?"

"The fellows all seem to be down on me."

"Perk, I don't think that is the way it is," interposed Carlton. "You don't understand what the fellows mean."

"I do understand what they mean, and that's just the trouble. They're down on me. I don't wear as good clothes as some of the other boys. They don't know how determined I am to get an education."

"It may be the best thing for you to go home," said Mr. Reed quietly. "I'm not sure that it is not. My strong advice to you, however, is to wait two or three weeks before you finally decide. By that time I shall myself be in a position to help you in the matter. Just now no one knows fully. I have remitted your punishment and promised you that the boys will not repeat their experiences. I advise you very strongly to reconsider the entire matter and wait until some time has passed and you and the boys come to a better understanding of one another, and you really can find out whether or not it is wise for you to spend the money, which you say has come so hard, in attempting to get an education."

Digitized by Google

"I'm not only going to try, I'm going to get it," broke in Perkins almost impudently. "If I can't get it here, I can get it somewhere else, I guess."

"That is yet to be determined," said Mr. Reed quietly. "Of course you'll do as you think best. I can only repeat what I said, and that is to urge you to wait two or three weeks before you make your final decision."

Courteously the visiting teacher withdrew and left the two boys in the room.

"Mr. Reed's always square," spoke up Carlton enthusiastically. "There isn't a fellow in the school who doesn't know that when he says a word he means it, every letter and every syllable too."

"I don't think very much of him," said Perkins.

"You don't know him."

"Why, he wanted me to give up trying to get an education."

"No, he didn't. You don't understand him at all. All he wanted was for you to stay here long enough to find out if it was worth while for you to spend your money in going to school."

"That isn't it at all. Of course it's worth while. Isn't that what Daniel Webster did?"

"Yes; but it doesn't always follow, Perk, that a fellow who does what D. Webster did will become another Webster."

"Don't you think I have any brains?"

"Of course you have brains."

"Don't you think I have brains enough to do

Digitized by Google

what you and Field and Anceps and the other boys are doing?"

"I can't speak for all of them," laughed Carlton. "It isn't merely the question of how many brains a fellow has, but it may be that it's too late to start. If you lose any of your teeth now, there aren't any new ones coming in their place."

"What has that to do with it?"

"Oh, you think it over and maybe you'll find out," laughed Carlton, as he departed from the room and returned to his own dormitory.

Whether or not it was due to the quiet interference of Mr. Reed, the special attention which had been given Perkins ceased in its more violent manifestations. The smaller boys, led by Redhead and his devoted followers, occasionally shouted their derisive calls when the awkward senior passed them. Carlton too had interfered with the plans of the mischievous younger boys, and a wholesome respect for his authority had caused an abandonment, at least for the present, of certain plans which had been formed.

Meanwhile, as the days passed, the entire school fell more completely into the regular routine. The daily work in the classroom was supplemented by the interest of all in the development of the school team. Matches were arranged between classes, but the chief interest was centered upon the outlook for the team which was to represent the Tait School.

The violent efforts of Perkins to carry out the

Digitized by Google

expectations of Carlton on the football field, which had resulted in such a complete failure, were not renewed for two reasons. One of these was Carlton's reluctance to subject his awkward classmate to new trials. The other was the manifest inability of Perkins successfully to do the work of the class to which he had been assigned. Indeed, there were times when Carlton found himself wondering why and how Perkins should ever have been permitted to join the senior class.

"I guess it's old age on his part and sympathy on the part of the teachers," he laughingly suggested to Anceps one day when the two boys were discussing their puzzling classmate. "He couldn't have entered on an examination. I have an idea that the teachers just let him come and show what he could do."

"He can't do much," laughed Anceps. "In the geometry class the other day he confessed that he didn't know the difference between a hypotenuse and a point."

"Are you sure you know the difference?" laughed Carlton.

"Not always. There are times when some of you fellows get the figures upside down when you put them on the board, and I have to stand on my head almost to see the way the figure was in the book. I have my doubts."

"I don't believe you know much more about it, Anceps, than Perk."

Digitized by Google

"Maybe I don't," acknowledged Anceps, smiling broadly, "but I can make a better showing anyway."

Carlton did not reply, for the conversation had been led away from the subject of their classmate's shortcomings. The topic was not resumed.

Carlton's feeling for Perkins was difficult for him to understand. There was little in the new boy that was attractive. He was opinionated, unduly quick to resent what he thought were implied slights, and apparently was ever on the lookout for some trick to be played upon him.

In the classroom the early failures of Perkins had steadily continued. Indeed, the preceding day Anceps had aroused the resentment of the awkward boy by slapping him on the back when they came from the classroom and saying, "Good for you, Perk. You almost made a recitation to-day. It was a close call, but you almost made it."

The anger of Perkins had been almost childish at the words of his classmate. Perhaps his feeling was stronger because, as he glanced toward the other boys, he saw by their expressions of delight over the statement of Anceps, that his opinion was shared by others.

As far as any outward manifestations were concerned Perkins was impervious to hints as well as to facts. He simply was unable to do the required work. To the boys it seemed almost as if he was without improvement. There was no prejudice due to the fact that he was caring for the teacher's horse

Digitized by Google

and cow and doing odd jobs about the school as they were offered him. There were other boys also who were working their way through, and some of them were among the most popular in the school.

Daily the thin, pale face of Perkins seemed to become thinner. There was an expression at times in his face almost as if he were being hunted. His manner became more nervous with every passing day. He never left his room without assuring himself that no one was lurking in the hallway to molest him. When he departed from the building he first glanced in every direction, almost as if he were expecting Redhead and his followers suddenly to fall upon him.

He was unhappy too. It was manifest to Carlton and others that the new boy was bitterly disappointed over his failure to receive the recognition he had expected, though it was still a question as to whether or not he was fully aware of his failures in the classroom.

He did not now come to Carlton's room for assistance in his lessons. It must be acknowledged that Carlton was not sorrowing over the break in their former relations, for he now was free to follow his own plans for work. Indeed, the new boy was less in the thoughts of the captain of the team, as the practice became more strenuous and the labor of preparation more severe.

A sharp interruption came when the first game of the schedule was played.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST LEAGUE GAME

THE little village was filled with visitors, for the first of the schedule games of the league was about to be played. The game with the Clark School, however, usually did not draw so many spectators as did that with the Military Academy. The latter was the chief rival of the Tait School, and usually the championship of the league was won by one or the other of these two schools.

Younger boys, brothers of those who already were enrolled in the Tait School, carrying banners of the school colors, girls with streamers, automobiles flying the banners of the rivals, were to be seen on every side.

It was natural that the excitement should confine itself to those who were most deeply interested in the outcome of the contest. Although some of the eleven had had experience in previous games, nevertheless there was a peculiar thrill as the players prepared to depart from the dressing-room after their uniforms had been donned.

Standing together near the entrance to the field, Anceps said to Carlton: "I understand that the Clark fellows have one guard that weighs two hun-

Digitized by Google

dred and ten pounds. He's a regular mountain of flesh."

"Mountains don't travel very rapidly," said Carlton somewhat nervously.

"Some one says they play a dirty game of football this fall. Their coach is a regular mucker."

Carlton laughed, but did not reply.

"I've heard they have two or three new tricks," continued Anceps, whose excitement did not permit him to be quiet for a moment.

"So have we," replied Carlton quietly.

"Yes, and we have two new formations that ought to do the job for us."

"We'll know more about that a little later in the game. We're all ready to start."

Together the sturdy band moved from their dressing-room and started toward the field in the distance. As they drew near, at a signal from the captain every player began to run, and still keeping well together the sturdy eleven advanced in this manner upon the field, where the Clark boys already were practising.

A wild cheer for the team and another for Carlton broke from the assembled Tait School boys who were occupying the bleachers on the west side of the field. Carlton was dimly aware that his name was called and of the cheers that greeted it, but the importance of the game was so impressed upon him that he did not turn his head even to acknowledge the greetings. Calling his players to one side,

Digitized by Google

he at once began to try out certain formations, and to practise the two punters of his team, upon whom he was placing no slight reliance.

"Have you noticed their little right half-back?" said Fletcher in a low voice to Carlton, when there was a brief interval in the practice. "He looks almost as round and hard as a rubber ball. Do you know anything about him?"

"No," replied Carlton, "except that I've heard he's the best man on the team."

For a moment both boys watched the activities of the player and their respect for him increased as they saw how easily he handled the ball.

In a brief time the preliminary practice was ended and the rival captains met in the center of the field to determine who should have the "kick-off."

Silence quickly rested over the assemblage as the coin was tossed into the air. The stillness was broken a moment later when, calling to his players, Carlton started toward the goal which the Tait boys were to defend. It became evident at once that the Tait School was to receive the kick-off, and the eyes of all in the assembly were turned toward the Clark boys, who were spreading out in a long line, and then turned to the kicker who was adjusting the ball in its position, a task which seemed to require considerable attention on his part.

The silence returned when the player retreated several yards from the line, and then, gathering his

Digitized by Google

forces, ran swiftly forward and kicked the ball toward the goal of his opponents.

Carlton, who was closely watching every movement of the opposing team, nevertheless was aware from a hasty glance which had followed the call of his name that Perkins and his tormentor Redhead were standing together near the side-lines. For a moment he was puzzled to understand how it could be that these two boys, between whom there had been such a pronounced antipathy, should now be together. He dimly thought of what possibilities of trouble might follow for the awkward new boy. Surely they presented a strong contrast physically, he thought, as he saw them in his momentary glance. Perkins was unusually tall, slight in figure, and his awkwardness was apparent in his every move, to all of which his younger companion, much shorter and stouter, presented a marked contrast.

The impression remained only for a moment in Carlton's mind, for the ball was coming directly into his territory, where the captain of the Tait School was playing left half-back.

On the thirty-yard line Carlton caught the ball, but as he started to run with it his foot slipped and he nearly fell. As he quickly recovered himself his opponents were upon him. Tucking the ball under his arm he lowered his head and darted forward. He had, however, only gone three yards before he was tackled and thrown.

A wild shout arose from the supporters of the

Digitized by Google

Clark School when it was seen that the captain of the Tait School eleven had made such a slight gain.

Every one was aware that the time now had come for the Tait boys to show their power. As they lined up quickly the excitement of the spectators increased. The quarter-back called the signals so slowly that his manner was almost tantalizing, and then, almost before the observers could see what was done, the ball was seized by Carlton, and he was striving to break through right-tackle.

In a moment there was a confused mass of legs and arms on the ground, and it was apparent that the fleet-footed captain had made only a slight gain. After the line-up the same position was again attacked, with the result that only one yard was gained. The Clark boys now were cheering wildly. "Hold 'em! Hold 'em!" they were calling to their team in a prolonged shout.

The signals, however, were now given, and suddenly Fletcher was seen trying to circle the right-end. His attempt failed and he was thrown without any gain. There was nothing for the Tait boys to do now but kick.

The spectators were excited and the noise was increasing in volume. Indeed, the shouts were continuous, and became well-nigh deafening when Anceps' kick was blocked and a mass of players fell upon the ball.

At last the body was untangled and it was seen that Carlton was entitled to the ball. This time a

Digitized by Google

great shout arose from the supporters of the Tait School. A great rip had appeared in the shoulder of Carlton's jacket, but apparently he was not aware of his accident.

The signals again were given with a loud voice and again there was a strong attack made upon the right-tackle of the Clark team. This time the attack was not checked until the squirming half-back had gained a full five yards. A renewed attack brought no results, and then a groan arose from the boys of the Tait School when it was seen that the ball had been fumbled and was concealed from sight under the bodies of the players, who threw themselves upon it and upon one another.

"Clark's ball! Clark's ball!" groaned Redhead when it became manifest that the opposing eleven had secured possession of the coveted ball. The play was on Tait's thirty-five-yard line, and too near the goal to permit the anxiety to pass.

There were loud calls for the team to "Hold 'em," and after two attempts to break through the line had been made and it was seen that the goal was threatened, the full-back dropped back to receive the ball for a kick.

The din ceased as the excited spectators watched the play. There was slight probability of the player being able to drive the ball as far as the goal-posts of his opponents, but the very uncertainty increased the excitement. The silence was broken as the ball rose high in the air, and a prolonged shout

Digitized by Google

followed when it became evident that it was certain to fall short.

Suddenly seizing the ball while he was running almost at full speed, Carlton darted around the left-end and started toward the goal of his opponents. In a moment it was seen that he was running swiftly and that only one player was before him, for the other members of the team had been massed near the center of the field.

The cries and shouts now were redoubled, when Carlton, dodging first in one direction and then in another, succeeded in eluding the outstretched hands of his opponent and passed the player. He had a free field now between him and the goal-posts.

Still, pursuit was not abandoned, and in a long line the Clark players strung out as they ran swiftly after the fleeing boy. The captain's efforts, however, were not in vain. Past the forty-yard line, on and still on ran Carlton, until behind him lay the thirty-yard line and then the twenty-yard line, and now only a few feet before him was the place which he was eager to gain.

He did not glance behind him, however, and increasing his efforts to the utmost of his strength still ran at his topmost speed. The shouting had ceased by this time, and there was one wild and united cry from every friend of the Tait School. In a moment Carlton had crossed the line and touched the ball squarely between the posts.

In a measure the shouting died away when the

Digitized by Google

ball was brought out and the Tait boys prepared to try to kick a goal. Fletcher was now called upon, and as soon as the ball had been placed in position he ran forward two or three steps and sent it squarely between the upright posts and above the cross-bar.

"Six to nothing! Six to nothing! You've got them, Carlton!" came the shrill call across the field, and the young captain smiled as he recognized the voice of Redhead.

In spite of the most vigorous attempts of the players and the inspiring calls from the bleachers, the score remained unchanged at the end of the first half.

During the intermission, while the players were being rubbed down and various schemes were talked over, Carlton, calling Anceps and Fletcher to him, said: "I propose for the rest of the game to hammer away at that place between right-tackle and right-guard."

"Running up against that fat fellow," laughed Fletcher, "is like bumping into a load of sand."

"If we keep on hammering we'll make an opening there, and you or I, Fletcher, will have to slip through."

When the game was resumed the plan which Carlton had outlined during the intermission was tried. With only slight changes whenever the ball came into possession of the Tait eleven, the team was hurled against the point between the guard and

Digitized by Google

the tackle. For a time the assault was withstood, and twice the Tait School lost a ball because they did not vary the play.

In the last quarter, however, the continuous hammering began to show results. The "fat fellow" now was showing signs of distress. He tossed his long hair and frequently rubbed his face with both hands, while perspiration streamed from every pore. It was manifest that he was becoming tired. Aware of the weakness in the opponents' line, Carlton called upon his teammates to redouble their efforts.

Two yards, three yards, and at last five yards were gained on the downs. Steadily the Tait School eleven pushed their opponents down the field. The two teams were evenly matched in weight, and the steady labors were not less in their effects upon the battling team than upon the line which received the onsets.

In this manner the ball at last had been worked to the fifteen-yard line. Only five minutes of play remained. The ball now was so near the goal of the Clark School that all the friends of the Tait School were calling upon their team for another score. There were repeated shouts for Carlton to try a drop-kick, but the calls were unheeded. Determined and confident, Carlton still was almost like a battering-ram, as he hit the opposing line. Some of his teammates were almost breathless. They seemed scarcely to be aware of the presence of the

Digitized by Google

spectators. The din which steadily arose was unheeded or unheard by most of the contestants. Still the signals were given and heard in a dazed manner, though the response was not lacking.

"Now, fellows, try once more," called Carlton in a low voice, after a whispered consultation between himself and Fletcher and Field, the quarter-back.

The Clark School players stood waiting to receive the ball. It was manifest that they too were confident that the assault would be renewed upon the weary tackle and guard.

"Now, then, fellows!" called Carlton. "All together! Every man on his tiptoes. Signal! Signal!" he added.

"One — four — six — twenty-one — twenty-five —twenty-seven!"

The ball was snapped back, and as the Clark boys began to mass themselves about the players whom they believed to be threatened, suddenly there was a forward pass by Carlton, who had received the ball, and Fletcher, who had been waiting to receive it with outstretched hands. Safely the ball was caught, and the fleet-footed player at once started toward the goal, which was only a few yards before him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

AFTER THE GAME

IT seemed almost as if pandemonium itself had been let loose when Fletcher began his run. The people on the stands no longer were seated. Banners and hats were waved, and the regulation school cheers were ignored as a wild cry arose from the entire Tait School contingent.

The confusion did not last long, however, for, as Fletcher drew near the longed-for line, he was tackled successfully and thrown just outside the goal. Only a few inches remained between him and the position for which he was struggling so desperately; but so far as success was concerned, the goal was as safe as if the entire length of the field intervened. The guard whom the boys laughingly had referred to as a whole mountain of flesh had fallen upon the prostrate player, and as his example had been followed by many of his teammates, when the tangled mass was straightened out it was discovered that Fletcher was lying breathless and helpless on the ground. The coach and two small boys, each carrying a pail of water, ran swiftly from the side-line. After a few minutes had elapsed, Fletcher struggled to his feet, and the game was resumed

Digitized by Google

without his aid. The frantic boy, unaware of what he was doing, and carried away by the excitement of the moment, was struggling and kicking desperately, as he was being carried from the field. His protests, however, were without avail, and Carney, a substitute, was placed in the line.

Just sufficient ground had been gained by the forward pass to enable the Tait School players to retain the ball. The line-up was made quickly, and the signals instantly called for.

"Ten — nine — eight — seven — six — five — four!" called the quarter-back sharply.

A rush was made upon the stout guard, but although he had been unable to run in the game, the Tait School players now were unable to force him from his position. Perhaps they were too nearly worn out by their own efforts during the game to have any strength left for the final assault. The second attempt was made with no better success, and then, to the horror of the Tait School and the delight of the supporters of the opposing team, there was a fumble; the round-bodied little half-back of the Clark School secured the ball, and with a free field before him raced across the field and scored a touch-down just before the whistle blew. There was no time in which to try for a goal. The final score was, therefore, in favor of the Tait School.

A game, which had been confidently looked forward to as a "walk-over" by the entire school, had barely been won! Each school had made its touch-

Digitized by Google

down in much the same manner. The Tait School, however, had been more fortunate in the period of the game when their success had been won, because they had been able to add to their score the points which kicking the goal secured for them.

Cheers for the teams were given, but the disappointment of the Tait School players, as well as of their supporters, was manifested in the very tones of the voices. The thought was in the mind of every one that if the Tait School could barely win in a game with the Clark School, what was to be expected when the game with the Military Academy was played?

The players were not running now, as they made their way slowly toward the dressing-room. Even after the rubdown and the shower-baths the spirits of the boys were not revived. Discouragement and depression seemed to have found an abiding-place in their feelings.

"This is no way to look at it, fellows!" exclaimed Carlton half angrily, as he stood before the mirror adjusting his necktie. "We're all of us disappointed; but it may be like a whip to a horse. It will start us into a quicker pace."

"It wasn't the fault of the team that we lost," growled Anceps.

"Whose fault was it?" demanded Carlton, as he turned abruptly and faced the player.

"If you don't know, I guess there isn't anybody that does," retorted Anceps.

Digitized by Google

"Why should I know any more about it than anybody else?" demanded Carlton.

"Oh, the captain takes all the glory when we win a game, but when we're beaten, then it's the fault of the players," said Anceps sullenly.

"I haven't said it was the fault of the team. I'm one of the players, I guess, am I not? I don't know what you mean."

There was a spot of red on each of Carlton's cheeks, and his eyes were filled with a new expression that boded little good for his classmate.

"I suppose you think you are," said Anceps, thoroughly angered by Carlton's manner. Both boys had been so near the verge of exhaustion by their strenuous efforts that their nerves were scarcely under control at the time.

"Why don't you say right out what you have to say?" said Carlton, slowly turning and squarely facing his classmate as he spoke.

"What I have to say is this," retorted Anceps, glaring at his friend: "The team wasn't handled right. You tried to run the whole thing, and didn't leave the quarter-back to play the game according to his own ideas. You stopped a half-dozen good plays that we wanted to try out, and you insisted on running with the ball——"

"I didn't run with the ball because I wanted to. I thought I was doing something to help the team," broke in the young captain.

"I can't help what you thought!" shouted Anceps.

Digitized by Google

"All I say is that the team wasn't run right, and you ought to know, as well as anybody, who tried to run the Tait School eleven."

"It isn't any fellow by the name of Anceps!"

"It doesn't seem to have been a fellow named Carl Hall, either!" retorted Anceps.

"I tried to," said Carlton more humbly, unwilling that the other boys who were present should witness any further quarrel.

"I can't help what you tried!" exclaimed Anceps. "I'm not talking about what you did as much as I am what you didn't do. We ought to have beaten these fellows thirty to nothing! And all we get is a touch-down and a goal, and they got a touch-down! The only thing that saved us was the whistle. Mighty lucky for us that the time was up."

"Anceps, do you think you could run the team any better than the present captain?" asked Carlton, looking intently into the eyes of his teammate as he spoke.

"I couldn't run it any worse."

"Maybe you'd like to try it."

"I never was much of a wire-puller," retorted Anceps. "I never have tried to get office, and I'm not going to begin now. There are some fellows who can run a good deal faster when they're after a position than they do when they're running after a ball."

"That's right. There are some fellows too, who can do a lot better talking than they can playing.

Digitized by Google

It's one thing for a man to have his heart like marble, and another thing to have a head that's all made of bone."

"I don't know whether you mean me or not," broke in Anceps, "but I'm perfectly willing to leave it to the coach or the rest of the team."

"Anceps, will you run the team the next game?"

"Not as it is now. All I say is that the team wasn't run as it ought to have been to-day. We lost out by forcing the quarter-back to run off three or four plays that a lot of kids in the grammar school ought to have done better in than we did."

"I'm not going to talk to you any more here," said Carlton finally.

"I'm not very good at talking to a blatherskite, either."

Ignoring the angry words that Anceps shouted after him, Carlton, who now was ready to depart, at once left the dressing-room and started toward his dormitory. He was more keenly disappointed over the outcome of the game than he was willing to acknowledge. He could not deny too, that there was a certain element of justice in the complaints of his classmate. Perhaps he had, he thought, compelled the call for the formation which tried to batter the heavy guard of the Clark School too many times.

Wearied by the result of the game, Carlton's thoughts became more gloomy as he approached the school grounds. Mortification was mingled with his feelings of anger. Although he had resented the

Digitized by Google

"He noticed a rope hanging from the window of Perkins' room"

Page 93

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

reproaches of his classmate, he was more troubled by the thought, which he could not banish, that there perhaps was some basis for his taunts. The game had not been well played, there was no denial of that fact. How much of the fault was due to his own efforts, or to his lack of efforts, it was difficult for him at the time to determine, but he was thoroughly cast down in mind and mortified by the failure to win from the Clark School by a more decisive score.

His feelings were intensified by the very fact that Anceps should have taken upon himself the task of instructor. It is true they had been good friends thus far throughout their school course, but that fact did not give the light-hearted boy the privilege of saying all that he had said at the close of the game with the Clark School. Carlton assured himself that he was not afraid of the final decision when all the Tait School boys knew of the charges and judged from their own experiences as to their justice.

Carlton now was crossing the school grounds, and as he drew near East Hall he noticed a rope hanging from the window of Perkins' room. He was not thinking of the awkward boy, and was simply impressed by the strange fact that a rope should have been left dangling after the manner of the one which he now saw.

For a brief moment he recalled the sight of Perkins and Redhead, as he had seen them standing

Digitized by Google

together on the side-lines during the game. He smiled slightly as he thought that perhaps the association of the two at that time might provide some explanation for the rope which he saw dangling from Perkins' window. He was, however, too much occupied with his own thoughts and too weary from the efforts of the strenuous game to give much time or thought to the strange sight. He passed on to his own room, and after he had entered seated himself in his easy chair and gazed despondently out across the school grounds.

Little was said that night at the table in the dining-hall, and to Carlton, who now was extremely sensitive, the very silence was ominous.

Didn't the fellows understand how hard he had worked? Did they not know that he had followed the line which had appealed to him as being the best for the team to use? He was stiff and sore from the effects of his own efforts. He never had played harder in any game in which he had shared.

Too proud to try to defend himself, Carlton left the dining-hall and alone walked back to his room. The boy was confident that the morrow would bring a different picture. Often when he had been wearied by the excitement or efforts of a contest he had said to himself when he retired for the night that he was in no frame of mind to look at these matters calmly. Morning would bring not only light to the world, but light to his heart and mind.

Striving in this way to assure himself that there

Digitized by Google

was no reason for being unduly cast down, the young captain waited for the morning.

The following day brought slight relief. The sneers of Anceps were manifest when the boys entered the dining-room. Hitherto Anceps had not been able to follow one line consecutively for any length of time. Carlton confidently had believed that the anger of his classmate would pass and his better self would assert itself. Apparently, however, instead of departing, the bitter feeling of Anceps had increased, and was shared by many of his fellows. Sensitive as Carlton was, he was aware of a different feeling creeping over his friends, which had not expressed itself in words, but was not lost among the boys of the Tait School.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

TROUBLES MULTIPLY

MEANWHILE the explanation of the presence of the rope which Carlton had seen dangling from Perkins' window had not been given him at the time when he had first discovered it, and both the fact and the lack of an explanation had almost vanished from his recollection. He was reminded of both, however, one morning nearly a week after the game with the Clark School, when Stone, one of Redhead's young chums, joined him on the way from the chapel to one of the recitation-rooms.

"Redhead is going to teach Perk a new language," chuckled the younger boy.

"What is the language?" inquired Carlton.

"I don't know just the name of it, but it's something like the music of that tune the old cow died to. Ever heard of that?"

"I believe I have," laughed Carlton.

"Well, this isn't the music, but this is the language that the old cow used. You hear it sometimes in a dog-fight. There aren't very many words, but every one means something. When you hear a dog ki-yi, you know what he means."

Digitized by Google

"What does he mean?"

"Why, he means that he's getting the worst of it. He wants all his friends to come around and sympathize with him. That's the reason everybody takes the part of the under dog."

"The other fellow doesn't have to call for help, does he?" laughed Carlton slightly, with more interest.

"You're right, he does not."

"Who's going to teach Perk this new language?"

"I believe Redhead has been elected special tutor in charge."

"When is he going to give him his lessons?"

"I can't tell you. You can trust Redhead for that."

"What's the object of this?"

"Why, the other day Redhead and two or three others of us—it was the day of the game with the Clark School," added Stone, and as he spoke the little fellow glanced up into Carlton's face with an expression which made the older boy flinch. The very action of Stone showed the presence of the feeling in the school which the captain of the football team had become aware was increasing daily. "We went up into Perkins' room to help him rearrange his furniture."

"Was he there?"

"No, he didn't happen to be in. We were just going to give him a great surprise. Everybody was down on the athletic field, and yet we didn't know

Digitized by Google

but some of them might be coming back almost any time; so, to prevent any trouble that might come from Perk's objections to our taste and best efforts to help him, we left a rope hanging out of his window so that we wouldn't need to stay there long after we had said good-bye."

The younger boy looked quizzically up into the face of his companion, and Carlton smiled slightly as he saw how excited the boy was.

"Did you use the rope?" asked Carlton.

"Yes, we did. Dummy Perry kept guard in the hall."

"I shouldn't have thought that you wanted a 'Dummy' for guard," interrupted Carlton.

"Oh, he can talk all right, but he stutters so that it takes him a good while to get under full swing. But the minute he begins to make a noise we understand what he means."

"So he warned you, and you slid down the rope?" asked Carlton.

"In a way, yes. We hadn't quite finished our job. We had tied only ten knots in Perk's sheet, and we expected to put in fifteen. We had straightened things out in his closet and had rearranged what he had in his trunk, and had just got to work upon the bed when Dummy called out 'H-h-h-here th-t-h-th-they c-c-c-come!'

"We looked out the window, and sure enough, there was Perk as big as life, coming up the walk with Mr. Reed. We waited until they got inside the

Digitized by Google

dormitory, and then we hung out the rope, and three of the fellows slid down all right——"

"You were one of them?" inquired Carlton.

"Yes, I happened to be the first one down," laughed Stone. "Redhead stayed until the last. We slid down that rope so fast that the heels of one fellow were on the head of another. It was almost like a sledge-hammer. We got down all right, and then we wondered why Redhead didn't come along too. We didn't stay long to find out, though, but made for our rooms as fast as we could, so as not to get caught."

"What did happen to your great chieftain?"

"Why, Perkins caught him before he could get out of the window. He made him untie all the knots in the sheet, and then he made him sit down on the floor while he poured a pitcher of water down his neck."

"And Redhead didn't enjoy that?"

"You wouldn't have thought he did if you'd seen and heard him afterward, especially heard him. He was a wobegone-looking chap. It had been hard work for him to untie those knots because some of them had been tied by two of us pulling at each end of the sheet."

"Did Perkins help him any?"

"Help him! Help him!" exclaimed Stone. "He helped him about as a hammer helps a nail. He kept him right at the job until the whole thing was done. Every knot had been untied. Everything in the

Digitized by Google

room was put in order, and then, worst of all, he was soaking wet. Well, little Redhead finally managed to get away, and he ran to the window and jumped for the rope. If he had missed it he would have broken his neck, I guess."

"And did Perkins try to run down the stairs and get him that way?"

"There wasn't time for anything like that," said Stone demurely. "There was just one slide for Redhead. He managed to get hold of the rope, but he bumped up so hard against the wall that he has black-and-blue spots on him as big as a saucer. And he didn't waste any time, either, let me tell you, in going down to the ground. He went so fast he said he couldn't see the building, and when he landed the rope had blistered his hands so that he hasn't been able to shut them tight since."

"And now he's going to pay Perkins back?"

"You just watch him and see!"

"I don't see that Perkins owes him anything," laughed Carlton.

"You don't! You don't!" demanded Stone. "You ask Redhead to show you his hands, and you'll sing another song. Redhead thinks Perkins owes him a good deal, and he's going to pay his debts too."

"How?"

"I can't tell you that; you'll have to wait and see."

"What about Redhead's debt to Perk?"

"Oh, that's all square. He doesn't owe him

Digitized by Google

anything now. He untied the knots and put everything in the room in order, so that's all fixed up."

"Then I don't see that either one of them owes the other anything."

"When you see Redhead's hands and get him to tell you about the black-and-blue spots on his body, I guess you'll think there is something yet that's coming to Perk."

"I don't see it that way," laughed Carlton, as he left his companion and turned into Griffin Hall for his recitation in English.

It became evident to Carlton that his classmate, Perkins, was under a similar ban from the class. When the boys departed from Griffin Hall, Carlton smiled a little bitterly as he saw how his classmate was avoided. No one spoke to him, and he was left to himself, as the seniors walked slowly across the campus to another recitation hall.

Apparently the awkward boy was not mindful of all the slights that were put upon him. Carlton, who had lagged behind most of his classmates, was soon joined by Perkins, who said as he approached, "I see they're doing the same thing to you that they're doing to me."

"What's that?" inquired Carlton sharply.

"Why, the fellows are down on you just as they're down on me."

The face of the captain of the football team flushed a dull red, and for a moment he was so angered by the statement of his companion that he

Digitized by Google

was tempted to retort in kind. A moment later, however, he was aware that the charge contained too much truth for him to put it aside lightly. His bitterness was increased by the knowledge that even such fellows as Perkins, for whom he cherished a feeling of good-natured sympathy, now adopted an air of condescension in their interviews with him. Poor Carlton! This was the bitterest of all his experiences in school. He had become so accustomed to occupying the position of leader and was so free with his advice or directions for the other fellows, that now to find himself occupying the place of the unpopular man was not merely a new experience, but one that was most trying. Carlton often had laughed over the pranks that had been played upon him when he was a newcomer, and condescendingly had told the other boys that the experiences of those former years had been the "making of him." In a way too, he had believed what he had said. The standards of the school, high in certain ways, still were not such as to prevent many of the things that in themselves were brutal, and he had justified these things after claiming that such attention was given only to the boys who really deserved it. Was it true now that he was receiving only what he deserved?

Angrily he thought of the game of the Clark School, in which he had exerted himself to the utmost of his ability and strength, only to be rewarded with misunderstanding and complaints. It

Digitized by Google

was plain to Carlton, who thoroughly understood the nature of the average boy of the Tait School, that Anceps had been busily at work. Doubtless he had been circulating false reports or insinuations that were even worse. Did Anceps want the position of captain of the football team? He was a good player, but Carlton had never thought of him as one who was ambitious to be the leader. Indeed, the very name, Anceps, had been bestowed upon him, as we know, because the boy had not been able to hold his face continuously in any one direction.

There was to be a game in the afternoon with the high-school team from the city of Vernon near-by. Carlton was thinking of the possibilities of redeeming himself in that game. His heart was somewhat lighter at the thought because he was confident that he could show Anceps his true position.

When the game was played, however, the captain speedily was aware that his hopes were doomed to disappointment.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

A CALL FOR A RESIGNATION

THROUGHOUT the game with the high-school team Carlton was unable to obtain any real response from his teammates. He had worked out previously several plans very carefully with the quarter-back, but somehow in every instance they failed to accomplish what he had hoped. The game was not considered an important one, and naturally there was not so much enthusiasm or interest manifested by the spectators as in other contests, but to Carlton Hall the silence along the side-lines and in the bleachers was most foreboding.

To the overanxious boy the cause seemed to be found in himself alone. He redoubled his efforts and threw himself with all his power into the various plays, but still the results he desired were not to be obtained.

In the closing half the high-school team secured the ball on a fumble, and again a touch-down was scored against the Tait School. Meanwhile, despite the encouragement of the captain and the calls of the quarter-back, the Tait School team consistently failed to gain, and had been unable to score. When the rival team departed from the field the Tait

Digitized by Google

School had been defeated. This was an experience new in the history of the athletic contests between the two schools. The friends of the high school, who had come in goodly numbers and had noisily supported their team, consequently were elated, and their songs and cries and cheers were heard long after the whistle had blown.

No player on the Tait eleven was more mortified or depressed by the result of the contest than was Carlton. Alone he made his way across the field, and did not speak to any of his mates when at last he was dressed and ready to go to his rooms. The glances which the boys had given him, the sneering expression upon the face of Anceps, as well as the fact of the defeat itself, caused Carlton to be fully aware of the position he now held in the estimation of his fellows. His feeling of keen mortification in a measure had departed. But along with it had gone also some of his determination. After the former game he had felt, as he had suggested, that the closeness of the struggle might serve to quicken the efforts of his own team, and it was not impossible the later games might show not only improvement, but the fact of the stimulus that might come from the exciting contest with the Clark School. Now, however, the conditions were somewhat different.

Keenly aware of the criticisms which had been passed upon him for taking so much upon himself in the Clark School game, Carlton in the game just

Digitized by Google

finished had gone to the other extreme, and taken but little part. He seldom ran with the ball, and then only because the quarter-back demanded that he should. His suggestions had been ignored, and somehow the troubled lad felt that he was defending himself against the unfavorable sentiment in his own school.

Thoroughly miserable, magnifying, as youth often does, the conditions which confronted him, he almost decided that he would not go to the dining-room that night. There was a prompting, however, that was stronger than his feeling of depression, and he was found in his accustomed place at the table, though he took slight part in the conversation of the boys, which, not unnaturally, turned upon the game in the afternoon.

When he departed from the building no one walked beside him, an experience almost unknown in the entire school career of the young captain. Usually he had been the most popular of boys, and there was no one whose company was more eagerly sought.

Too proud to show in public the suffering which he was undergoing, Carlton quietly refused the invitation of Perkins to come to his room and likewise informed his somewhat troublesome classmate that he desired to be alone, and did not feel free to invite him to his quarters.

The clouds that rested upon the summit of the hills that surrounded the valley in which the Tait

Digitized by Google

School was located were not so dark as those which rested upon the spirits of the eager-hearted lad.

He had been in his room only a few minutes when Anceps and Fletcher entered. The bearing of each was so constrained that Carlton was almost positive that he understood the purpose of their visit, before a word had been spoken.

"The Tait School didn't cover herself with glory this afternoon," suggested Fletcher, striving to speak lightly as he seated himself in the chair to which Carlton pointed.

"Not so that any one could notice it," replied Carlton with a smile.

"It's too bad," joined in Anceps with a scowl. "There's something wrong."

"I think that's so," said Carlton soberly.

"Have you any idea what it is?" inquired Anceps.

"Why?"

"We would like to know, that's all. Almost every fellow in the school agrees with you, and thinks there is something or somebody wrong."

Carlton made no reply, and to the disappointment of his visitors, failed to follow the lead which they had given him.

"What does the coach think?" he inquired at last.

"He thinks just as the boys do."

"What is that?"

"That there's something or somebody, or both, wrong with the team."

Digitized by Google

"Does he say what he thinks is wrong?" asked Carlton slowly.

"We might as well come right out with it, Carlton," said Anceps, striving to speak boldly.

"I wondered why you didn't before."

"You don't think we've come because we wanted to, do you?"

"When you say 'we,' I answer 'no.' If you refer to yourself, I say 'yes.'"

"You think I came because I wanted to?" demanded Anceps loudly.

Carlton did not reply until the question had been repeated in tones still louder.

"Do you want me to answer that question, Anceps?" he said at last.

"Of course I do."

"Then, I say 'yes.'"

"I should like to know what you mean by that," said Anceps, his face flushing slightly. "I haven't any feeling myself in the matter."

"You haven't!" exclaimed Carlton, losing some of his self-control. "You haven't!"

"No, I haven't," repeated Anceps.

"Why don't you say what you came to say?" inquired Carlton in a lower voice. "You haven't come to pay me a friendly call, and you have got something you want to say. Why don't you say it, Anceps, and be done with it?"

"I don't like what you said just now," said his visitor.

Digitized by Google

" ' Why don't you say what you came to say ? ' "

Page 108

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"I don't know that I'm to blame for that."

"We might as well out with it now as any time," declared Anceps, as he looked to his companion for confirmation. Fletcher slightly nodded his head, but did not look at Carlton as he did so.

"The truth of the matter is," said Anceps, speaking rapidly and betraying by his manner the nervous strain under which he was laboring, "there aren't many fellows in the school who think you are the one to be captain of the team, Carl."

"Is that so?" inquired the captain slowly, who was doing his utmost to retain control of himself and was determined that, however keen his suffering might be, his visitors should not be able to report any manifestation of it.

"Yes, that's so," retorted Anceps.

"It is kind of you to come to tell me about it. I appreciate very much your unselfish motives. Of course you haven't any idea who it is that the fellows—or you—would like to put in my place, have you?"

Carlton was aware of a smile that crept over Fletcher's face, though his classmate turned quickly away to conceal his feeling.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Anceps loudly.

"I mean just what you think I mean."

"Do you say that I want the place for myself?"

"I haven't said so."

"Do you think I do?"

Digitized by Google

"Yes."

"Somebody has got to take your place, and the coach and a lot of the fellows think that I'm the one to do it. I shouldn't think of it if you were playing up to your usual form. But you, yourself, know that you're——"

"What is it you want?" broke in Carlton.

"I was trying to tell you," said Anceps, his courage apparently increasing as he became aware how quietly Carlton was receiving his statements. "The fellows haven't got anything against you, except that you're not playing the game you did last year, and don't seem to be able to get the work out of the team."

"Would they like me to get off the eleven?"

"No, of course not," said Anceps quickly, glancing as he spoke at Fletcher, who plainly had not thought of this contingency.

"They leave that to me, then, do they?" asked Carlton in a low voice.

"Why, yes, of course. I don't know just what you mean," stammered Anceps. "Everybody would be glad to have you keep your place as half-back. All they say is that you don't seem able to work the team up to the place where it belongs."

"And so they're going to make you captain, are they?"

"I don't know about that," stammered Anceps, his confusion returning once more. "The coach thinks I ought to take it."

Digitized by Google

"What do you think about it yourself?" once more demanded Carlton.

His tones were even now, and he was positive that he would not betray any excitement he might feel. He was doubly eager not to permit his visitors to carry away with them any report that he had been chagrined by the request they had made, or mortified by a call for his resignation.

"As I said to you, somebody has to take the place. I didn't try to get it——"

"Of course not, we all understand that," chimed in Carlton mockingly. "You aren't interested in getting me out because you want to get yourself in. I think every fellow in the Tait School who knows you will have his own opinion about that."

A smile appeared once more on Fletcher's face at the cynical words of the young captain; and even Carlton himself was not unmoved by the manifest confusion of Anceps.

"You have a right to your own opinion——" began Anceps.

"Thank you," interrupted Carlton, bowing his head in acknowledgment.

"You have a right to your own opinions," continued Anceps, "and you'll have to give the same right to the other fellows. They think you ought to get out as captain."

"Why don't they say so then?"

"They do. That's the reason why Fletch and I are here now."

Digitized by Google

"Are you a committee?"

"In a way, we are."

"What way?" demanded Carlton persistently.

"Why, the fellows wanted us to——"

"What fellows?"

"The team."

"All of them?"

"I guess so. Most of them anyway, didn't they, Fletcher?" said Anceps, turning once more to his companion.

Fletcher nodded his head, but did not speak.

"Who suggested it?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I do."

"Who was it?"

"Oh, a two-faced fellow. I think you know him. If you don't, there are some other fellows on the team who can tell you."

"You mean to say that I worked the whole thing up?"

"I'm sure you did."

"And you don't intend to resign?"

"I haven't said so."

"If you don't," declared Anceps loudly, "the team'll put you out!"

"Will they?" inquired Carlton, laughing derisively.

"Yes, they will! Fletch knows that just as well as I do. What are you going to do about it? What shall we tell the fellows?"

Digitized by Google

"I don't think what I say will have much to do with what you'll 'tell the fellows.' You'll tell them what you want to. You have two faces, one that looks toward the boys and another that looks toward me, and both are looking out for yourself."

"There isn't any use in our standing here talking like this," said Anceps. "All I want to know is what you're going to do about resigning as captain of the Tait School eleven."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

CARLTON'S PERPLEXITY

"I WANT to think this over," said Carlton slowly, after a brief interval of silence.

"You want to think fast," exclaimed Anceps angrily.

"Perhaps you would like to help me think it out."

"It seems to me it ought not take a fellow very long to find out what he ought to do, even if he doesn't want to do it, when the whole school feels about it as I am telling you they do."

"I'll let you know about it when I'm ready."

"Perhaps you'll know before you're ready," retorted Anceps, as taking his cap he hastily departed from the room, accompanied by Fletcher, whose manner still betrayed his embarrassment.

Left to himself, the feeling of mortification and discouragement once more passed swiftly over Carlton.

That Fletcher, of all the boys in the school, should be one of the committee to come to him with a request for his resignation! Throughout the course Fletcher had been his most intimate friend. They had visited in each other's homes and had had almost no secrets from each other. And Fletcher

Digitized by Google

had been his most ardent supporter. It was he who had nominated him for the position of captain. And now to find him arrayed against him was one of the most bitter of Carlton's reflections.

"I didn't stop to rap; I knew you were in your room, for I saw Anceps and Fletcher leaving here just a little while ago."

Carlton looked up as he heard the unexpected salutation and saw Perkins standing before him. He was almost tempted to tell his awkward classmate that he preferred being left to himself. There were serious problems to be considered, and he must decide very soon an important issue.

However, he concealed his feelings, and did not speak when Perkins, closing the door, seated himself unbidden in an easy chair.

"What is it, Perk?" inquired Carlton somewhat tartly.

"Oh, I just ran over to tell you that I know what's going on."

"What's going on?"

"Don't you know?" inquired Perkins in surprise, sitting erect as he spoke.

"I know some things, but I don't know what's going on in your mind."

"Why, it's about the captain of the football eleven."

"What about him?"

"Why, they tell me that they're getting up a petition to have Anceps made captain in your place."

Digitized by Google

"Is that so?" said Carlton slowly, aware that his face was pale and that there was a great sinking in his heart. "Who told you about it?"

"Why, everybody knows it," said Perkins. "I came over to tell you that I wouldn't sign the paper."

"Why didn't you sign it?"

"I don't like that fellow Anceps. His name fits him all right. You can't trust him."

"I've sometimes suspected that myself."

"Well, I know. You can't fool me. I've had plenty of experience in dealing with people, and I know when I find somebody I can tie to."

"So that's why you came to me, is it?"

"That's one reason. I'm going to stand by you."

"Is anybody else going to stand by me too?"

"I don't know anything about that. All I know is that I'm going to stand by you."

"Thank you," said Carlton somewhat bitterly, although the tones of his voice were lost upon his visitor.

"That's what I am," continued Perkins. "Do you know, I think Anceps is after the job himself?"

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh, I see him hobnobbing with the fellows all the time. I told you you couldn't trust him."

"But the fellows all think I'm no good and not fit to be captain."

"Don't you believe it," exclaimed Perkins. "The trouble is they don't think at all. The team has had some bad luck, but only a few know why."

Digitized by Google

"Do you know?" inquired Carlton, smiling slightly. "Tell me."

"Why, yes. It's perfectly plain. They aren't playing a good game."

"Thank you. I hadn't thought of that reason. If you have put your massive intellect at work upon the problem, perhaps you can tell me then why they haven't played a good game."

"Probably they can't."

"That's one reason. Give me another."

"They haven't tried."

"Why haven't they tried?"

"My opinion is," said Perkins importantly, "that Anceps is behind it all. I think he has been working up the feeling among the fellows and they haven't stopped to think of it at all. What he wants is to get you out and get himself in."

"It's good of you to say so, Perk. I appreciate your good will. I'm afraid, however, that it won't go very far in changing the conditions."

"I'll do my best."

"To do what?"

"Why, to keep Anceps from getting your place."

Carlton shook his head as he said: "There's no use in that, Perkins. If you want to help me you'll keep perfectly still. Don't say a word about it to any one."

"But I don't see——" began Perkins.

"Well, you do as I tell you," broke in Carlton sharply. "Don't talk about it to any one. Don't

Digitized by Google

tell any one you have been to see me. Just keep perfectly quiet and we'll see how things work out."

Carlton rose from his chair as a hint for his visitor to depart, but his effort was lost upon Perkins.

"Don't you want to get out your Virgil now? It's a pretty hard lesson. I was up at four o'clock this morning, and I can't make much of it."

"I'm in no shape to study now," said Carlton shortly.

"Well, I'm sorry. I thought maybe working together we could do the work better than we could if each one was by himself. I have got to try to get the lesson anyway, so I think I'll be going."

"Good-bye," said Carlton, so eagerly that a feeling of remorse came over him and caused him to add: "I'm sorry, Perk, that I can't do the Virgil with you. Some other time maybe I'll be more in the mood for it."

This time Perkins departed and Carlton, determined to be left to himself, not only closed the door, but also locked it.

Seating himself at his desk he drew forth a sheet of paper and began to write: "I hereby tender my resignation as captain of the Tait School eleven."

Leaning back in his chair he gazed steadily at the note before him, and hesitated about signing his name to it. Should he resign on the mere report which had been brought him by Anceps and Fletcher? Ought he not to wait and find out if what they reported was true? Doubtless, Anceps

Digitized by Google

was expecting him to hand in his resignation immediately, and was preparing to take advantage of his action.

On the other hand, could he be positive that the report represented the real feeling in the school? Almost eagerly Carlton thought over the experiences of the fall. He remembered how hard he had worked and how much time he had given to training the eleven. And this was to be his reward. The team was composed of the poorest material which the school had provided in several years. Ought he to be blamed for the weakness of the players? He was well aware that even if Anceps should be elected captain, he would want him to be retained as one of the half-backs.

Without boasting, Carlton assured himself that he was the best one to be found in the entire school. He was fleet of foot, not lacking in courage, and equally good in taking advantage of an opponent's mistakes. Such a combination was essential in any one who was to play in that position. There was no one to take his place. Of this the disheartened boy felt sure.

But he assured himself he did not intend to hold any position in which he was not wanted. Still gazing moodily at the resignation which he had written, Carlton at last, without having signed his name, decided that he would postpone action. He would talk with Mr. Reed before he did anything more in the matter.

Digitized by Google

Impulsively rising, he took his cap and at once departed from the building to secure the counsel of the man whom he had come to know as one of the best in the corps of teachers. The kindness of Mr. Reed, his manifest friendliness, and his justice were all elements in making the man one of the most respected of the teachers. Several times when in trouble Carlton had sought him, and his advice had always been most helpful. The troubled boy felt that never in his life had he needed more the counsel of one upon whose judgment he might rely.

He found Mr. Reed in his room, and as Carlton entered he was greeted in the quiet, cordial manner which the teacher seldom failed to manifest toward his young charges.

"What is it, Hall?" inquired Mr. Reed. "You look as if you had something on your mind that troubled you."

"I have. I have, Mr. Reed," replied Carlton, "and there's no one except you who can help me."

Drawing his chair a little closer to the one in which Mr. Reed was seated, Carlton, without mentioning any of the names of his troublers, related many of the events which had led to the demand for his resignation as captain of the eleven.

Mr. Reed listened attentively, aware that the experience was not a light one for the perplexed and mortified boy, and did not speak until Carlton had ended his story.

"I've written my resignation," said Carlton, "but

Digitized by Google

I haven't signed it. Before I did that I wanted you to tell me, if you will, Mr. Reed, just what your opinion is."

"Do you mean about signing it?"

"Yes, sir."

"I can't tell you what to do, Hall, but I could decide the matter for myself in a minute."

"How would you decide it?"

"If I was sure that there was any extensive feeling among the players that it would be better for the team if I should resign, I should do so at once."

"Would you go around and ask the fellows," inquired Carlton somewhat bitterly, "whether or not they wanted me to keep on as captain? I cannot do that. I don't care much for the position anyway, and I certainly do not think enough of it to ask any one not to vote against my holding it."

"Your feeling is perfectly proper, and yet you ought not to be hasty. However, if you're convinced that the feeling is general, you will be in a better position if you take the initiative than you will if you wait for some one else to take it. The only thing I say to you is, that you ought to be positive that it is not merely a report, but is a true condition. You say two of the team have made a request that you should resign?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did they come because they had been appointed or simply to speak for themselves?"

Digitized by Google

"An——" began Carlton, and then hastily correcting himself continued: "The fellows who came said they came for the team, and not to speak for themselves alone."

"Isn't there some one you can ask, whose word you can rely upon and who will not misunderstand you? How would it do to ask the coach?"

"I have thought of that. Of course I don't know him very well. There doesn't seem to be any one else."

"Very well; then it seems to me that's the thing for you to do."

"If I don't resign there will be a fight, and there will be another one if I do. I know An—the boys—so well that I'm sure they will swing back again if things don't go all right under a new fellow."

"Talk with the coach, and then, if you wish, you may come to me again before you make your decision."

"That's what I'll do," said Carlton quickly, as he arose and left the room.

Digitized by Google

"The coach hesitated"

Page 123

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

CARLTON'S DECISION

THE troubled young captain decided, as soon as he had departed from the teacher's room, to seek out the coach at once and learn from him, if possible, what the true condition of affairs was. This was in accordance with the suggestion that Mr. Reed had made, and the more Carlton thought of it the more forcibly he was drawn by it.

A half-hour elapsed before he succeeded in finding the man whom he was seeking. The coach was in the village post-office, and as Carlton discovered him he said: "Come with me up to my room; I want to talk with you about the team."

The coach hesitated, and Carlton smiled bitterly as he noticed his evident confusion. The feeling of hesitation speedily departed, however, and together the two made their way to Carlton's room in South Hall.

When they had entered and seated themselves, Carlton, swinging about in his chair before his desk and looking directly into the face of his visitor, said, "Do you know why I asked you to come?"

"I can't say that I do."

"Haven't you any idea?"

Digitized by Google

"I'll know more after you tell me, Hall. You said you wanted to talk with me about the team."

"Yes, but particularly about one member of the team. Have you heard that some of the fellows want me to resign as captain?"

"I have heard something of the kind," replied the coach uneasily.

"I don't want to ask you who spoke to you about it, and I haven't any desire to go into details. Do you know whether or not there is any feeling of that kind?"

"As I said, I believe somebody had told me that some of the boys would rather have Adams for their captain."

"Was it Adams that told you that?"

"Of course not," said the coach.

"Has Adams had any talk with you about the matter?" asked Carlton. He was greatly pleased that the coach had referred to Anceps, and that he himself was not compelled to introduce him by name, because the suggestion had just come from his visitor. Angry as Carlton was, he still was determined that he would not humiliate himself by referring to the quarrel between himself and his rival, for he was sure that the chief trouble arose from the ambition of Anceps Adams to oust him from his position and secure the place for himself.

"A little," admitted the coach.

"Did he speak to you about it or did you speak to him?"

Digitized by Google

"I don't remember."

"Have you had more than one talk?"

"I think it's likely."

"Did he mention the matter to you before the team began its practice?"

"Oh, I don't know just the days when he spoke about it," said the coach sharply. "I don't pay much attention to the quarrels of the boys. I've had all I want to do to keep them in line for their games."

"You know whether he ever mentioned the matter to you before the season opened," said Carlton quietly.

"What if he did?"

"No matter about that. All I wanted to know was whether the trouble had sprung up lately or whether it began further back."

"I think it is likely he may have spoken of it before the regular practice began. I'm not sure, though, and I've no head for dates anyway."

"That is, you admit that you and he were talking about this matter before the work of the eleven began?"

"I don't see what that has to do with the matter."

"It isn't necessary that you should see," said Carlton positively. "I simply want to get a few facts in my mind."

"You needn't bring me in," suggested the coach warmly. "I have had nothing to do with your troubles."

Digitized by Google

Ignoring the statement, Carlton quickly asked, "Now I want to know if you agree with the boys?"

"In what?"

"In thinking it will be better for the team if I should resign."

"Not if you want the best player on the eleven for captain."

"Do you think I'm the best player on the team?"

"Without question."

"That's good of you to say so," said Carlton, slightly mollified in spite of the feeling of anger which he felt for the man before him. The young captain had never been strongly drawn to the coach because he had abounded in suggestions for what the boys frequently called "dirty" football. However, he was thoroughly conversant with the game and all its finer points. The material upon which he had to work when the school opened was certainly not promising, and yet in spite of this a steady improvement had been noted and the team was far in advance of its condition when the season opened.

"Do you think it's better for the team that I should resign?"

"I didn't say that."

"But that's what I want you to say. I want to know just what the feeling is."

"It won't stop your playing, will it?" inquired the coach anxiously.

"I haven't thought much about that yet. What I want to know now isn't whether I should play on

Digitized by Google

the team, but whether I should be captain any longer."

The face of the coach lightened and the change in his expression was not lost upon his listener.

"If there is much feeling, Hall," suggested the coach at last, "it might be just as well if you will let some one else be captain. You can play your position——"

"Honestly, who do you think will be elected in my place if I resign?"

"Adams probably."

"Don't you think some one else might be selected?"

"Not as things are now," said the coach promptly. "I'm sure the great majority of the fellows want Adams."

"Does he want it himself?"

"You'll have to ask him," laughed the coach, who still was displaying many of the evidences of his uncomfortable feeling. On the football field he was supreme. His word was law and every player obeyed him instantly. In the dormitory in South Hall conditions were different, and the coach, who was not a man of any culture or finer feelings, plainly was not at his ease while the young senior was sharply questioning him.

"That's about all I want, thank you," said Carlton, rising from his chair as an indication that the interview was at an end. "Thank you very much for coming up here."

Digitized by Google

"But I haven't said much," said the coach. "You asked me if I thought the most of the eleven would rather have Adams as captain, and I told you just what I thought; but honestly I don't know much about the real conditions. As far as I'm concerned I'm satisfied to have either one of you two boys as captain. It's not a matter in which I have meddled. Do you think I have?" he demanded sharply, as Carlton made no reply to the implied question in his statement.

"I don't know anything about it," said Carlton quietly.

"Are you going to resign?" asked the coach, lingering near the door.

"You'll know that as soon as anybody."

"I hope you won't lay up against me anything I have said to you to-night. I haven't anything against you, and as I said I'm perfectly willing to have either you or Adams for the captain of the team. We have mighty poor material this fall anyway, and if we can make a respectable showing it'll be about all I can ask. I should like to know," he added, "that you'll keep your place as left halfback. You're going to do that, aren't you?"

"I haven't made any plans," replied Carlton. "That is, beyond the place of captain of the team."

It was manifest that the young captain did not intend to disclose his plans at the time, and, somewhat chagrined, the coach departed.

Seating himself once more at his desk, Carlton

Digitized by Google

drew forth the slip of paper on which he had written his resignation, and, after signing his name, folded the paper and placed it in an envelope, which he sealed and addressed to the secretary of the Tait School Athletic Association. His first impulse was to carry the letter himself, but a little later he decided that he would summon little Stone and make him his messenger. This was easily done, and fearful that his courage might fail him Carlton at once sought out the lad and entrusted him with his message.

Returning to his room Carlton seriously gave himself to the consideration of whether or not he should remain on the eleven. He was no longer captain. If he should give up his position of half-back also, would the boys receive the impression that he was mortified and had resigned from both because he had lost one? Would he not be stronger if quietly he continued his work as half-back and ignored the manifest feeling of his teammates as well as the air of superiority which he was confident Anceps would at once assume? In spite of his bitterness, Carlton smiled as he thought of the airs of the senior, who, without doubt, speedily would be elected captain of the football team. Even now he could see in his mind the glistening teeth of Anceps and the smile which at times was so encouraging and then again could be "absolutely inane," as Carlton described it.

Seriously troubled, he was unable to decide the

Digitized by Google

question; and at last, when the retiring bell was rung, he seemed to be as far from a solution as when he had begun.

Deciding that he would talk the matter over with Mr. Reed the following day, he retired to his bedroom, but it was long before the troubled boy fell asleep.

Spite, or bitterness, or dislike, which had become so manifest among the boys of the Tait School, was difficult for Carlton to understand. Up to the present he had been one of the most popular boys. He had fought his way to a place of recognition, and what it had cost him to renounce it very few could understand. His experience was so limited that he was unable to explain the existing prejudice, although in his own mind he was convinced that it had sprung from the jealousy of Anceps.

Once more the troubled boy thought of Fletcher. It still was unaccountable that his best friend should have deserted him in an hour like this. That Anceps should change was not unexpected. But that the quiet, faithful, earnest-hearted Fletcher should be counted among his enemies was something difficult for Carlton to understand.

The following afternoon, just before the hour of practice, Carlton went to the rooms of Mr. Reed; but unfortunately the teacher was absent and it was impossible for him to have the desired interview.

Still somewhat undecided, Carlton made his way

Digitized by Google

to the dressing-room in the gymnasium and donned his football suit. None of his companions was there at the time, but the young senior knew where they were. Doubtless a call had been issued for a meeting of the eleven to take action upon his resignation. There was no question as to what that action would be, thought Carlton. Though the problem of still retaining his position was in a measure unsolved, he decided that he would ignore the slights which had been put upon him and do his utmost in the practice of the afternoon.

It was not long before the players came running noisily to the dressing-room. An abrupt silence fell over every one when the boys discovered that Carlton already was there.

"What do you want to resign for?" called out White somewhat nervously, speaking first among the players.

"I didn't say I wanted to resign, did I?" inquired Carlton quizzically.

"You resigned, anyway," exclaimed White, "and we elected Anceps captain in your place."

"I expected you to do that," said Carlton quietly, and without looking in the direction of the new captain, who for some unaccountable reason was silent.

"I'm glad that you kept your place on the team, anyway," continued White.

"Are you? I'm going to play this afternoon, anyway."

Digitized by Google

"You aren't going to play the baby act, are you?" exclaimed White, aghast. "Somebody said that if you couldn't be captain you wouldn't play at all."

"Anceps ought to know better than that," said Carlton, as without waiting for his companions to finish their preparations he departed from the dressing-room.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV

CARLTON'S ADVICE

THE remaining members of the team soon appeared, and although there was an air of constraint manifest among them all, nevertheless every boy was quick to obey the suggestions of the coach. The new captain did not lack confidence in himself and in his own suggestions, and frequently conferred with the quarter-back concerning the plays which he wanted run off.

As for Carlton, the hour proved to be the most trying he had ever experienced. Bravely he was striving to repress any manifestation of envy or mortification. Occasionally he was called upon to run with the ball, and every time he did his utmost. He was curious concerning the meeting and the vote which had been taken upon the acceptance of his resignation. He was too proud, however, to make any inquiries, and when the players finally departed from the field, he did not refer to the matter which was uppermost in his mind.

He smiled bitterly when he saw that Fletcher apparently avoided him. This was as he himself desired because it was more difficult for him to understand the attitude of his closest friend than it was

Digitized by Google

to see that the natural disposition of Anceps simply had manifested itself in the recent unpleasant experiences.

Carlton did not try again to see Mr. Reed. He had concluded that the decision was one which he himself must make. It was a bitter struggle, but at last he brought himself to the point where he decided that he would not resign from the team. What the future might have in store no one knew, but for the present, difficult as the position would be for him, he decided that he would not appear petty in the eyes of his companions, however much they might misunderstand his actions.

Three days were to elapse before the game with the Greenwood Institute, the third game which the Tait School was to play in the schedule arranged by the league. The coming game was looked upon as one that might decide whether or not the team had improved in its work. On several days White came to Carlton's room, and though he tried to conceal his real purpose in the visits, Carlton had no difficulty in understanding that what he desired to have confirmed was the assurance that the left half-back would not fail the eleven in the coming game.

Carlton was at no pains to enlarge upon the matter and quietly avoided the question as much as possible. Perhaps there also was in his mind a desire not to make his successor unduly confident as to the outcome. By not saying anything concerning the possibility of his not playing, Carlton left

Digitized by Google

his classmate to infer that he would be found in his place on the day of the game.

And in his place Carlton was found when the important time arrived. He was aware when he ran upon the field that in the assembly, which was nearly as large as that which had gathered for the game with the high school, there were references concerning the change in the position of captain of the Tait School eleven. It was more than likely that the young senior magnified his fears, but the very fact that Anceps had started forward at the toss of the coin for choice of goals made him believe that every spectator must be aware of the feeling of bitterness which was in his own mind.

Whatever enthusiasm was lacking in Carlton's mind, there was no display of his feelings. He was a proud-spirited boy and was determined, as he expressed it, to learn to "burn his own smoke." Never yet had he "crawled." His duty to the school was stronger than his feeling of mortification. Besides, he was firmly convinced that all his troubles had arisen, not through any fault of his own, but because of the jealousy of his classmate. Anceps was not a boy to draw back from anything which would enable him to accomplish his purpose, or at least so Carlton in his bitterness assured himself.

The game with the Greenwood Institute proved to be no marked improvement over the one which had preceded it. There was confusion among the players, and somehow Carlton was convinced there

Digitized by Google

was no marked desire to encourage the new captain. As for Anceps, in his over-eagerness he twice fumbled the ball and, though once White recovered it, the second time brought a heavy loss to his team.

A grim smile appeared upon Carlton's face as he watched his supplanter, but he did not speak. With all his strength he threw himself into the contest and was satisfied when the game was ended that never had he played better. Twice he broke through the opposing line, making runs for thirty and fifty yards respectively. His heart was made lighter too, by the enthusiasm and applause which greeted his efforts. Even if the spectators were aware of the mortifying experiences through which he had recently passed, they still were able to judge him fairly, and they recognized the difference between a good player and a poor one. Perhaps in the end their estimate would be more just.

If Anceps did not improve over the game he had played with the Greenwood Institute, Carlton was aware that his future was not promising. There was nothing for him to do but wait. He had taken a definite position and no one had heard him whine, he repeatedly declared to himself. Indeed, when the players departed from the field, and the game had ended in a tie, Carlton was even slightly elated as he recalled the part which he had taken. He was glad that he had refused to follow his first impulse, which was to have nothing more to do with the team.

Digitized by Google

"That was a good game you put up to-day, Carl," said White, as he joined him on his way from the gymnasium.

"Was it?" inquired Carlton, smiling.

"You know it was. I thought I knew you, Carlton, but I've made up my mind that I don't. You beat me," he added, shaking his head to emphasize his uncertainty.

Carlton, however, said no more and soon turned to his dormitory.

When he entered his room he discovered that Perkins was seated before his desk writing on Carlton's stationery. He glanced up as Carlton entered, but instantly, without greeting him, he resumed his task.

For a moment Carlton stood and stared at the awkward boy. What a change had come over him, he thought. Perkins was not more graceful in his manner and movements than he had been, but there was a marked change in his bearing. Just what it was Carlton was unable to decide. His clothing was as ill-fitting as it ever had been; the celluloid collar glistened with the same sheen it had formerly displayed; there was the same wide gap between his shoetops and trousers; but in spite of all these things there still was something markedly different in the boy.

"There!" exclaimed Perkins as he signed his name and then wheeled about in the chair to face Carlton, "that's a good job done."

Digitized by Google

"What have you been doing that is so entirely satisfying to you?" inquired Carlton with a smile.

"I've just written a letter."

"Well, that isn't the finest thing in the world to do. I write every week regularly to my mother, but every other letter I dodge if I can."

"You haven't got a two-cent stamp anywhere, have you, Carl?" inquired Perkins.

"Why, yes, I think I have."

Perkins was so supremely unconscious that he was asking anything out of the way that Carlton was inclined even to urge him on. Was there any limit to the fellow's effrontery? He was the most unique specimen of his kind, Carlton declared to himself, that he had ever seen.

He gave his visitor a postage-stamp and then said as he looked kindly at him: "What's come over you, Perk? You're not the same fellow you were when you entered the Tait School."

"Of course not. Of course not," replied Perkins glibly. "You don't expect me to be, do you? What would have been the use in my coming if I didn't profit by some of the advantages which the school promised to give?"

"I'm not so sure they are all 'advantages,' Perkins," suggested Carlton more soberly. "What have you been doing?"

"Gotten my eyes opened for one thing," said Perkins still more glibly.

Digitized by Google

"In what way? What do you see now that you didn't when you came? Who opened your eyes?"

"I've found out that it doesn't pay for a fellow to be too careful."

"About what?"

"Anything or everything," laughed Perkins. "When I came here I thought I must obey every rule. I must do just exactly what the teachers told me."

"And you have learned better?" asked Carlton, looking more seriously at the boy before him.

"Yes, I've learned better," said Perkins. "What's the use?"

"What have you been doing that's so bad?"

"I don't know that it's so terrible bad, but I've been down-town two or three nights with some of the fellows."

"After hours?"

"Yes."

"Which fellows did you go with?"

"I sha'n't tell you. I've learned to keep some things to myself."

"Where do you go?"

"Oh, nowhere in particular."

"You just thought you were breaking the rules of the school and that was enough, was it?" inquired Carlton sarcastically, though his feeling was entirely lost upon his thick-skinned visitor.

"There's no use in trying too hard. I've found that out already."

Digitized by Google

"Trying what too hard?" demanded Carlton sharply.

"Oh, trying to keep in with the teachers. They don't think any more of you, and I'm sure the fellows don't."

"Perkins," said Carlton slowly, "do you know that you're making a fool of yourself?"

"I know I'm not," said Perkins, unmoved by the question.

"Socrates says there are some people who don't know enough to know that they don't know," retorted Carlton angrily.

"I think that's so," acknowledged Perkins, still unmoved by the sarcasm and evident anger of his classmate.

"I thought you came here because you were determined to get the most you could for your money."

"That's just what I'm doing," spoke up Perkins. "I was fool enough when I first came to believe that if I worked hard the teachers would try to help me."

"They will."

"But they don't," declared Perkins. "Mr. Reed is just as hard with me as ever he was."

"Of course he is. You're a fellow who has to have some hard things done before you can be licked into shape, Perk."

"I guess I don't need it any more than some other fellows," said Perkins unabashed.

Digitized by Google

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why, you're not the captain of the football team, are you?"

"No. What's that got to do with it?" demanded Carlton, his face flushing in spite of his efforts to control his feelings.

"Why, nothing," said Perkins, "except that I don't see that you're in any shape to talk to me. You say I don't get some things because I don't know enough to know what I need. Maybe you're getting some things you don't want because——"

"Because I need them too?" laughed Carlton, although there was no mirth in his voice.

"If it's sauce for the goose, it's sauce for the gander, isn't it?" said Perkins.

"I'll own up, you've got me there. I'll say no more about it," said Carlton.

"All I'm afraid of is that you'll get into trouble and you'll lose what you're spending your money for."

"You can trust me for that," asserted Perkins confidently. "I'm learning some things."

"So I hear. I understand that Redhead has been teaching you some of them."

"The little imp," said Perkins, instantly sitting erect in his chair at the mention of the name of his chief tormentor. "He gets me into trouble all the time."

"What's he been doing to you now?"

"I sha'n't tell you," said Perkins. "I must be

Digitized by Google

going," he added as he arose from his seat. "I've got some work to do. That is, I've got to go unless you'd like to have me stay and study with you."

"Thank you," laughed Carlton; "I think I'll not rob you of your time to-day."

"Aren't you going to study now?" asked Perkins.

"Not just now."

"All right; then, I guess I'll be moving along."

Perkins, however, had not been gone more than a half-hour before he hurriedly returned to Carlton's room, and as soon as he entered he made it manifest that serious trouble of some kind had befallen him.

Digitized by Google

" 'I have been suspended!' "

Page 143

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV

SUSPENDED

"WHAT'S wrong? What's happened?" demanded Carlton as he looked at his classmate in surprise.

Distorted with fear or anger, Carlton was unable to determine which, the awkward boy presented a strange appearance as he rushed into the room. He wore neither coat nor hat. His hair was disheveled and his eyes seemed almost to be starting from his head.

"I—I—I—I——" he began.

"Sit down, man," broke in Carlton. "Calm yourself. What's wrong? What's the matter with you? What's happened?"

"I—I—I have been suspended!" Perkins managed to gasp.

"Suspended?" queried Carlton. "Why?"

"Mr. Reed just told me that I have been suspended because I've been leaving the ground nights after study hour."

"Well, you have, haven't you?"

"Yes; but why should they pick on me? I haven't done any more than lots of the fellows have done. Some of them try to get away every night. I don't

Digitized by Google

want to be suspended. It isn't fair. They pick on me because I'm poor."

"Keep still a minute," said Carlton sharply. "Who else has been suspended?"

"Nobody. They aren't poor the way I am."

"Keep still, I tell you!" almost shouted Carlton. "Did Mr. Reed tell you that you were suspended?"

"Yes, he did."

"When did he tell you that?"

"Just now."

"Where?"

"In his room. He told White to tell me that he wanted to see me in his room and I went right up there, and that's what he had to say to me."

"Did he ask you if you were guilty?"

"No, he just took that for granted."

"I don't believe he took anything for granted," said Carlton with a smile. "Mr. Reed knows what he's talking about before he begins. He didn't send for you until he had proof of just what you had been doing."

"Why didn't he tell me before, then?" said Perkins, almost with a sob in his voice.

"I don't know that."

"No, he just picks on me. I haven't any one to take my part, and I came up here a poor boy. I have worked hard to get my money. I don't know where I'll get any more, and now just because I can't fight back they pick me out of the crowd that went down the street and tell me I'm suspended."

Digitized by Google

"Did he say how long you were to be suspended?"

"No."

"Did he tell you when it was to begin?"

"No."

"I don't believe you know much about it, anyway. You're all rattled. You've lost your head, Perk. I'll go over with you and we'll talk to Mr. Reed about it."

"No, I won't go!" almost shouted Perkins. "You can go if you want to. I can't stop my friends from doing whatever they please for me, but I'm not going to see that man again. He sent for me and I went to his room, just as he told me to. I'm not going to follow him up. I can work in the mill if I have to——"

"What's working in the mill compared with orating like D. Webster? I thought you were going to be like him," broke in Carlton.

It had been some time since the new boy had made any reference to the career of the great orator. Whether this had been the result of wisdom he had learned, or his discovery that the statement was likely to bring certain activities into being on the part of the younger boys, Carlton could only conjecture.

"You stay here, Perk. I'll go over to see Mr. Reed myself, and find out just what there is in all this."

Without waiting for his visitor to follow him,

Digitized by Google

Carlton hastily departed from the room and at once sought the teacher who had been reported by Perkins as the cause of all his troubles.

Fortunately Mr. Reed was found in his rooms, and as soon as he discovered who his caller was he cordially bade him enter and soon the two were talking together as if there were no difference between their positions in the school.

"Is Perkins really suspended?" inquired Carlton, after he had described the distress and despair of his recent visitor.

"Not at all," said Mr. Reed with a smile.

"But he thinks he is."

"Does he?" Mr. Reed had a peculiar manner of slightly drawing down the corners of his mouth which gave a quizzical expression at times to his face. He was always quiet in his manner, yet in spite of the low, even tones which he used in the classroom, a case of disorder was never heard of there. A few of the boys feared him, for his tongue was sharp, and he had no mercy for one who was trying to shirk the work assigned him. On the other hand, many a time his expressive eyes would light up, though there would be no trace of a smile upon his lips, when he referred to some instance well known to the boys that brought at once a strong response from the class.

This expression was on Mr. Reed's face now.

"Hasn't he been suspended?" inquired Carlton.

"Not yet. I called Perkins to me as soon as I

Digitized by Google

found that he was following some of the spirits in the school who would surely get him into trouble. He is older than most of the boys and ought to know better, but apparently there has been a marked change in him of late——"

"I have noticed that change myself," broke in Carlton eagerly. "I don't quite understand it."

"He is not unlike some other boys, who have had a different training from that which most of the boys in the school have had in their homes. Sometimes these boys are strong enough to continue steadily on their way. Others, however, become aware of their own deficiencies and try to make up for them by aping some of the other boys or striving to appear very different from what they really are. It is not hard to understand what kind of home Perkins had. I have no question that he worked very hard in the mill to get his money, and that he saved it scrupulously. When he entered the Tait School, for the first time in his life he found himself in contact with boys of different training and ideals. At first he was shocked by some of the things which he saw and heard, but later the foolish lad thought he would atone for his ignorance by trying to show these other boys that, after all, he was not unlike them. He might have been respected by every one in the school if he had followed the even course of his first few days. Now he has the respect of no one. The task is hopeless. I have no expectation of any good results, but I felt that

Digitized by Google

it was only justice to the boy for me to warn him as well as to let him know that what he was doing was not likely to escape the attention of the teachers. I am convinced that he has not been vicious. He is simply weak. Weakness, in my mind, is simply another name for wickedness."

"What was it you told him, then, Mr. Reed?"

"Nothing, except that I gave him a warning. He was guilty and so thoroughly frightened, or angry, I am not sure which, by what I said that even yet he has not fully recovered from the experience."

"I'm afraid he hasn't," said Carlton, smiling slightly as he spoke. "But it will be a great relief to me to be able to say to him that he misunderstood what you said and that he hasn't yet been suspended, but that he will be if the case occurs again."

"I have no objection, Hall, to your telling him that, although with all my heart I wish it were possible for you or some one to persuade the boy to go home. He ought to go back to his work in the mill. He is absolutely unfitted for what he has planned. His money will be wasted; his time might much better be spent at his loom——"

"But he has told me of any number of boys who started poor and became great men," protested Carlton.

"Did he mention the name of Daniel Webster?" inquired Mr. Reed quizzically.

"Yes," laughed Carlton. "D. Webster has been at the head of his list."

Digitized by Google

"Perkins forgets that for a fellow to rise there must be something in him more than poverty. There has been much arrant nonsense talked into some of these boys. It doesn't follow that because some exceedingly successful men began life poor, if other boys who are poor will start they can all become successful. When I say successful, I mean famous. I cannot explain to Perkins what the deficiency in his make-up is. There is no hope, however, if he tries to follow the line which he has drawn. He cannot fit himself for that, and yet by his training, if he keeps on, he will unfit himself for the work which he can do well. I sometimes think that one of the chief causes of the unrest and discontent which to-day are everywhere manifest is that some boys have been encouraged to wade in beyond their depths. Instead of being taught that true success is to be found in doing well what one is able to do, they have been taught that success lies in a career like that of some exceptional man who has risen not because of his poverty, but in spite of it."

"What do you think about me?" inquired Carlton in a low voice, his expression betraying how serious he was.

As Mr. Reed glanced hastily at him he said, "I don't know what you mean."

"Do you think that I'm making a mistake in sticking to school and planning to go to college?"

"No," replied Mr. Reed simply.

Digitized by Google

"Well, I'm not making a very brilliant record," said Carlton bitterly.

"You don't know whether you are or not," suggested the teacher kindly. "These troubles of yours are not light ones, I understand that, and yet you must not forget on your part that they are only like the experiences of all men. The greatest benefit of an education is that it shows a man to himself. You cannot implant certain qualities if they are not born in one. The best you can do is to develop sooner or later what is there. Every boy comes to certain crises in his life. I fancy, Hall, that you have arrived at one of yours. Some time you will smile as you think about it; but, at the same time, now it is exceedingly important, and I would in no wise belittle it. More than you are aware, Hall, you are showing whether or not you have the possibilities of success in you."

"I don't understand what you mean," said Carlton.

"What I mean is just this," said Mr. Reed: "Troubles come to every one. A man shows the stuff of which he is made by the manner in which he meets them. It is possible for one to run, though it is impossible for him to run away. The other way is for a man quietly to meet or bear these things, never losing sight of what lies beyond them."

"What does lie beyond them?" asked Carlton.

"Something good, though I cannot tell you now what it is."

Digitized by Google

"Do you think the fellows will be——"

As the boy hesitated, the teacher smiled and said kindly: "Do you mean that you are sorry that they put Adams in your place as captain of the eleven?"

"That's about it."

"I'm not worrying about the eleven nor about the other boys. I simply am telling you just how this trial in your life may work out good or bad for you. It may make or it may break you. You know fire softens some things and hardens others. I fancy it is somewhat the same in what we call the harder experiences that come to us."

"What do you think I'll do? Do you believe that I shall run?"

"Not right away."

"I sha'n't run at all," replied the boy.

"I don't think you will, but I'm not yet sure."

"Don't you think I have got through the worst of it?" asked Carlton quickly.

"I trust so with all my heart, but no man knows. If you feel too low-spirited or the attitude of the fellows becomes unbearable, don't hesitate to come over to see me if you think I can do you any good."

Accepting the hint thus quietly given, Carlton at once departed from the room and went back to his own quarters.

Perkins no longer was there, and his absence brought a sense of relief to the perplexed lad.

His recent interview with the man whom he respected most of all among the teachers of the Tait

Digitized by Google

School had appealed greatly to some of the stronger and better elements in his heart. It was worth while, he assured himself, to fight his way through to the end. Not that he would fight aggressively, for his greatest battle was to be with himself.

It would be so much more easy to enter another school and leave behind him all the memories of the injustice and mortification which he suffered in the Tait School. But would he leave also the possibilities of avoiding these same problems wherever he went? It was hard to meet them when one felt himself so helpless. The effect of the teacher's words, however, was so strong, at least for the present, that in his inexperience Carlton felt that he had the problem already solved. He would never show the white feather. No one in the school ever should hear him whine. It was hard for him to bear what was manifestly so unjust, and yet it would be harder for him to reveal his sufferings to his companions.

An unexpected help came, however, to Carlton in his troubles, although he did not realize at the time that his new and novel experience was to be a source of strength.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVI

THE ILLNESS OF PERKINS

REFERENCE has already been made to one of the younger boys named Stone. It was he who became the sturdy champion of the deposed captain. Whenever permission could be obtained he was found in the room of the older boy.

At first Carlton had been inclined to accept his homage good-naturedly, but as he found himself more and more abandoned by the boys of the school, he appreciated more fully the deep and genuine sympathy of his young admirer.

In a measure Carlton's sufferings were not alleviated by the unconscious homage of the boy, who was in the lowest form in the school, but as the days passed and the sympathy of the little fellow became more manifest, Carlton found himself frequently looking forward to the coming of the first-form boy.

One day the little fellow appeared at Carlton's room with one of his eyes discolored and his nose betraying evidences which the older boy at once recognized.

"What have you been doing, you little rascal? Fighting?"

Digitized by Google

"Not much," replied Stone in some confusion.

"Don't lie out of it. Tell me just what you have been doing," said Carlton more sternly.

"Nothing. Nothing much," said Stone. "I just stood up for—for one of the fellows in the school."

"Who was it? Did you stand up for me?" demanded Carlton, his heart softening at once.

"Redhead said you were no good."

"And you told him I was?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Then what happened?"

"Why, Redhead came at me."

The confusion and mortification of the lad were so apparent that Carlton broke in and said: "You needn't tell me any more. I guess I know the rest, but don't get into trouble on my account. I've enough for two. If you feel that you need any more than you have, you can come to me and I'll give you some." His heart nevertheless was deeply touched by the loyalty of his young champion. Indeed, when Stone departed from his room, he stepped to the window and watched the little fellow as he made his way across the school grounds to his own dormitory.

"He's a good friend, all right," he said to himself. "He hangs to me the way I used to hang on to Captain Dan Richards. I wish Dan was here," he added softly, as he recalled the sturdy captain of the nine of the preceding year.

He still stood looking out upon the trees which

Digitized by Google

now were almost bare of their foliage. It is doubtful, however, whether Carlton saw any of the objects before him. He was thinking of the boy to whom he had clung much as little Stone now was following him. The thought sobered him. He wondered if it was possible that he could mean as much to Stone as Captain Dan had meant to him when he was a little fellow. At all events he was his sturdy champion. "He'll have that black eye for a week," he said to himself as he turned away, "and all because he's standing up for my rights."

The recollection of his own feeling toward Mr. Reed did much to strengthen the good purposes of Carlton's heart.

The other boys of the school might all be against him, but as long as he had one firm and unswerving believer, he must do his utmost to be true to him.

The struggle, however, was not becoming any more easy with the passing days. Indeed, Carlton was relieved when the hour of football practice was ended. Faithfully he attended to his duties, and his work on the field did not suffer any loss. He still was the half-back upon whom the team relied. Anceps, now that he had been made captain, attempted to resume his former friendly relations, but Carlton quietly and effectively showed him that the former days were gone. He was not noisy, nor did he betray any anger, nevertheless Adams clearly understood that the place which he once held in the affections of Carlton Hall was no longer his.

Digitized by Google

It was plain too, for a time, that the new captain was doing his utmost to have his companions resume their friendly ways. It was impossible, however, for a boy like Fletcher to assume a bearing which he did not feel. The result of the efforts of Anceps, therefore, was simply to intensify the existing conditions and leave Carlton more and more to himself, thereby increasing his sufferings.

Carlton had gone directly to Perkins' room after his interview with Mr. Reed, in which he had learned that the teacher had no more than warned the awkward boy that the course he was following would certainly lead to suspension or expulsion, but that as yet neither sentence had been passed upon him. The relief of Perkins was almost ludicrous, and his gratitude to Carlton, which he declared should be "world without end," lasted exactly for two days, as far as any possible evidence of it could be seen.

It was true that he also tried to sympathize with Carlton, never once realizing that sympathy was the last thing the determined young ex-captain would bear.

More and more Carlton withdrew from his associations and lived a lonely life. Perkins occasionally came to his room, and Stone, as we know, was a frequent visitor. Otherwise Carlton's life in the Tait School would not have been markedly different had he been the only student present.

One evening before the bell rang for the beginning of the study hour little Stone burst into the

Digitized by Google

room, his face aglow and laughing as if he were unable to control himself.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Carlton, laughing as he listened to the contagious giggle of his little visitor. "You look as happy as if you had had something to eat. That's what you think of more than anything else, isn't it, Stone?"

"You had better ask Perk if he has had something good to eat."

"What do you mean? You little imp, have you been feeding him?"

"I haven't, but somebody else has. Perk thinks he's going to die. He wants you to go over to his room. He says there never was anybody in the world as sick as he is."

"Did he send you over here?" inquired Carlton sharply.

"Yes."

"Well, then, what are you laughing about, if Perkins is as sick as you say?"

"I didn't say he was sick. I said he says he's sick."

"Well, is he?"

"He has what the doctor used to say to me sometimes was 'symptoms,'" chuckled Stone in his delight.

"Keep quiet, you little rascal," shouted Carlton. "Tell me just exactly what all this is. Are you trying to play any of your pranks on me?"

"No, sir," replied Stone. "Not a bit of it. I

Digitized by Google

just came over here to tell you what Perk said. He wants you to go to his room. He thinks he's going to die."

"Do you think he is?"

"I guess you'll see him at the table to-morrow morning. That's where he gets most of his exercise, anyway."

"I have a great mind not to go over there at all. I'm suspicious of you, Stone. If you get into trouble——"

"Oh, come on," broke in Stone impatiently. "I want you to have one good look at Perk."

"All right," responded Carlton, and taking his cap he quickly followed the eager lad as he ran from the dormitory toward East Hall.

When Carlton entered Perkins' room he was startled at the appearance which the boy presented. His face was ghastly pale and he was apparently helpless. Lying upon his bed he slowly turned his head to see who his visitors were. A groan prolonged and agonizing escaped him when he discovered Carlton.

"What's the matter?" said the latter cheerily. "Are you sick?"

"You don't suppose I would be lying here doing what I have been doing if I wasn't sick, do you?" growled Perkins.

"What's the trouble?"

"I don't know. I've just been dreadfully sick."

"When were you taken?"

Digitized by Google

"Just before dinner."

"Before dinner? I didn't suppose you would ever get sick then, Perk."

"Well, I did get sick," groaned the boy, "and I thought I was going to die."

"You're not going to die," laughed Carlton, "but I don't know what the trouble is. Perhaps I had better have a doctor come."

"No! Don't send for any doctor," exclaimed Perkins, sitting instantly erect and showing already that he was improving. "I can't afford to have a doctor, and besides that I don't believe in them. One tells you to do one thing and another one tells you not to do it. They both of them charge you two dollars apiece, and, if you do what they both advise, you would be doing just what I'm doing now."

"What's that?" laughed Carlton. "Nothing?"

"That's it, and it's a good deal cheaper," declared Perkins. "I'm two dollars in, and I'm feeling better since you came."

It was manifest to Carlton that, whatever the sufferings of Perkins might have been, he was speaking truly when he said that he was improving. The color already was beginning to return to his face and his eyes now had their usual expression. He did not, however, offer to rise from his bed, and as Carlton turned to look at his younger companion he saw that he was perched on the edge of the table swinging both feet vigorously and grinning as if his cup of joy were almost full.

Digitized by Google

"What are you laughing at, Stone?" demanded Carlton.

"Perk."

"You ought to feel sorry for him instead of laughing at him."

"Oh, you don't know it all," exclaimed Stone, beginning to laugh once more. "Want me to tell you about it?"

"Yes; of course I do."

"Does Perk want me to tell about it?" demanded the little fellow, looking toward the patient on the bed.

"Tell it if you want to," groaned Perkins.

"All right, here goes," chuckled Stone. "Carl, do you know that broad window back of the dining-room?"

"Yes," replied Carlton, beginning to laugh, as already he suspected that he knew the story which Stone was about to tell him.

"Well, that's where the cook puts the pies to cool off. She has a long row of them there almost every day just before dinner. Redhead and two or three other fellows have been sneaking one or two pies and taking them up to their room. Mr. Hull—you know Redhead sits at his table—told him to stop it. He said he would get into trouble if he didn't. Redhead didn't believe him and this afternoon he took a big fat pumpkin pie. It was the one nearest him, and he sneaked it off around the corner and took it up to his room. Perk here, it

Digitized by Google

seems, saw him, and he told Redhead that he would have to give the pie to him."

"Did he?" laughed Carlton, his eyes twinkling with delight.

"Ask Perk."

"Did he give it to you?" inquired Carlton, turning to the boy upon the bed.

The patient's face was now turned toward the wall and a groan was his sole response.

The actions of the awkward boy, however, were a source of added delight to Stone, who retained his seat upon the table, still swinging his feet and not for a moment turning his gaze away from the boy on the bed.

"Oh, it was rich!" shouted Stone. "It's the best thing that's happened this year. I must tell you about it. No, you get Perk to tell you. He knows more about it than I do."

The face of Perkins suddenly was turned toward the boys, and its expression was such that Stone glanced toward the door to make sure that if he should deem it wise to depart suddenly the way was still clear.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVII

THE DISTRESS OF PERKINS

"I DIDN'T know anything about it," roared Perkins. Stone edged a little nearer the door, but the temptation to remain in the room was stronger than his fear.

"I tell you," repeated Perkins, in still louder tones, "I don't know anything about it! I don't know what you mean now. What're you talking about?"

"Poor boy! He didn't know it was loaded," suggested Stone, an impish expression appearing on his face as he glanced toward the angry boy in bed.

"Did Redhead know?" abruptly demanded Perkins.

"He does now," laughed Stone.

"Is he sick too?" asked Perkins eagerly, instantly becoming better.

"Sick! Sick!" repeated Stone, his laughter breaking forth afresh. "Well, if he isn't sick, I don't believe he would be acting the way he is."

An expression of relief appeared upon the face of Perkins, but it would be hard to tell whether it was due to the fact that misery is said to love company, or because he believed that the boy who had

Digitized by Google

brought him into trouble had done so unconsciously and had shared in the experience.

"Never mind, Perk," said Stone, an expression of solemnity appearing for a moment upon his countenance, "it'll do you good. It's the only way some fellows ever learn."

"Learn what?" roared Perkins in such a manner that once more Stone moved a few inches nearer the door.

"Learn how to take care of themselves," said the little fellow mockingly.

"But you say that Redhead is sick too. Why don't you talk to him about taking care of himself?" asked Perkins.

"He's too sick for me to talk to him now. My, you can hear him groan the whole length of the corridor! He yelled for his mother, and when they heard him some of the fellows down there were scared. They didn't know whether he had smallpox or delirium tremens."

"What's the matter with him, anyway?" laughed Carlton.

"I don't know the name of the disease," replied Stone glibly. "It is the same thing that Perkins, here, has; only Redhead isn't quite so grouchy about it."

"He don't feel as bad as I do," said Perkins. "He couldn't. No man ever felt the way I do and lived."

"Oh, yes, they have. You poor boy!" said Stone

Digitized by Google

mockingly. "A great many people have been sea-sick and felt just as you do. My, you look better already, Perk! I haven't seen your face look this way since you entered the Tait School."

"Tell him how it happened," suggested Carlton, still smiling as he saw the wobegone expression of Perkins.

"How do you suppose I know?" grinned Stone.

"If I thought you did know anything about it," broke in Perkins, "I'd see to it that you got all you deserved!"

"That wouldn't be much," retorted the younger boy, as again he moved slightly nearer the door.

"Tell him about it. Tell him about it, anyway," said Carlton.

"All right," responded Stone glibly. "I don't know that I have the right of it. You might ask Mr. Hull if I'm correct."

"Go on with your story," called Perkins.

The patient was sitting erect in bed now, and it was plain that his feeling of nausea was gone. He was enraged, however, and it required but a small matter to cause him to give expression to his feelings. Manifestly, Stone was aware of the frame of mind of the senior, and mindful too of his own safety, he again moved slightly nearer the door as he heard the demand.

"Why, the best way I can figure it out," said Stone, "is something like this. Somebody was stealing the pies from the window-sill where the

Digitized by Google

cook placed them every day to cool. It was a mean trick too. I wouldn't steal a pie that way."

"You mean you wouldn't steal only one," broke in Carlton with a laugh. "If it's a mean trick to steal one, what kind of a trick is it to steal two?"

"That's what I meant," said Stone soberly. "It's a mean trick for you to steal one. I never would stop at a little thing like that." The mischievous boy laughed loudly at his own joke. "Well, I understand that the cook complained to Mr. Hull. Mr. Hull spoke to the boys at prayers two or three nights ago. He warned them to quit their foolishness, but his warning didn't seem to have any effect. Here's Perk and Redhead both sick. Poor chaps," said he mockingly, as he glanced at one of the victims, who was listening eagerly to his story.

"Don't mind him," broke in Carlton, laughing again. "Go on and tell us the rest of the tale."

"Why, there's not much more to tell," continued Stone. "Some of the fellows didn't pay any attention to what Mr. Hull told them, and now they wish they had."

"What did Mr. Hull do?" demanded Perkins.

"I don't know what he did."

"I believe you mean to say that he put something in those pies!"

"Oh, no," said the little fellow lightly. "Not all the pies, if you mean that; but I hear that two of them had been doctored and placed just where you and Redhead could lay your hands upon them."

Digitized by Google

"'Doctored?' 'Doctored?'" demanded Perkins. "What do you mean by that?"

"Why, there was something put in these two pies."

"What?"

"Not being there and not seeing the performance, I cannot say exactly, but I hear it was ipecac. Not enough to do you any damage, you understand; but just enough to make you remember that pumpkin pie."

"Who put the ipecac in the pie?" said Perkins as he leaped from the bed, an action which caused Stone hastily to gain the destination he had previously been seeking by degrees. The temptation to remain, however, still was too strong, and with his hand on the knob ready for instant flight if occasion demanded, the lad remained standing, his countenance beaming, as he glanced toward the awkward senior.

"Not being there, I cannot say. I took heed to the dire warning of Mr. Hull," said Stone mockingly. "Not much! You don't catch me stealing pies after he had said you'd better not. It would have been better for some other fellows in the school too, if they had done as I did."

"Who put that ipecac in the pie?" again shouted Perkins menacingly.

"Search me! I didn't," retorted the little fellow glibly.

"You know who did, though."

Digitized by Google

"I don't know any more than you do."

"Mr. Hull put it in," declared Perkins. "I'll make him pay for that! I'll sue him! He cannot make me go through what I did without having to pay for it."

"I don't see how you're going to sue Mr. Hull for damages," laughed Carlton. "The pies weren't yours, anyway. You stole them, and, besides that, Mr. Hull warned you specifically not to touch them."

"He didn't warn me any more than he did the other fellows," groaned Perkins; "but I'll sue him! Yes, sir! Just as sure as you're born! It'll cost him a pretty penny before I'm done with him."

"Of course, you'll be able to prove that he put the ipecac in the pie?"

"I know he put it there."

"That isn't what I say. You'll be able to prove it, won't you? You'll have to get somebody that knew he bought the ipecac, and that he took it and put it in the pie himself. He may decide, however, that he'll bring a suit against you for stealing the property of the school."

"I pay for my board, I guess," said Perkins. "The pies are a part of the board."

"Are they? You go into the cook's pantry now, and tell her you want that pie you own, and see what will happen to you. No, Perk; you were warned not to touch those pies, and yet you went directly against the warning."

"But I didn't know there was any ipecac in

Digitized by Google

them," groaned Perkins, as once more he clasped his hands on his head as if even the memory of his sufferings had brought back the former experience.

"You know it now, don't you?" laughed Stone.

"I think he has some suspicions," said Carlton demurely, as his classmate failed to answer.

"That was a dangerous thing to do," groaned Perkins. "Why, he might have killed us. A man has no right to put any such thing in pie."

"My mother says a man will eat anything that's put between two crusts and called a pie. I'm not just sure whether she ever made an ipecac pie or not, but that's what she says."

"Why, it's poison!" shouted Perkins, his anger returning in full force as he became aware of the outrage which had been visited upon him.

"Your grandmother!" said Stone. "'Poison?' Poison nothing! Ipecac is good for you. I've taken lots of it. Though, I'll have to own up, Perk, it never affected me quite as it did you."

"That was a mean trick," said Perkins, still angry.

"Now, look here, Perk," said Carlton sharply, "you haven't any one to blame but yourself. You stole the pie and you had been told not to touch it."

"I didn't steal it," declared Perkins; "Redhead took the pie."

"Who took it away from him?"

"Why, I did," acknowledged the senior with a

Digitized by Google

groan. "I wish I hadn't, but I didn't think that little Redhead had any right to take those pies, so I——"

"So you just took them away from him, and then took them back to the window-sill, where they belonged, didn't you, Perk?" laughed Carlton.

"No, I didn't. But I wish I had. I saw little Redhead running away with the pies, so I took them away from him; but they looked so good I took them up in my room and——"

"Did you take both pies away from Redhead?" laughed Carlton.

"No, only one."

"Oh, yes; I see. That explains why Redhead didn't come down to dinner, either. If you had taken both of them, Perk, you wouldn't have shown up for two weeks."

The thought caused Perkins to groan as he said: "I'll have to do something to that boy. He's the torment of my life. He doesn't let me study, and bothers me every time I step out of the corridor."

"There's one thing you'll have to do first," suggested Stone.

"What's that?"

"Catch him."

"I'll get him all right," said Perkins confidently.

"That'll be a fine trick," said Stone; "taking a little fellow like that. Why don't you take Carlton, or somebody your own size?"

"Carlton didn't put any ipecac in my pie."

"Redhead didn't, either. He wasn't looking for

Digitized by Google

a piece of ipecac pie, let me tell you! He was as much surprised as you were. You ought to see him this morning."

"Does he look as bad as I do?" inquired Perkins more cheerfully.

"No, he couldn't do that, if he tried," said Stone.

To Carlton's surprise, Perkins became angry at the remark, and moved threateningly toward the younger boy.

"I believe you put that stuff in those pies yourself," he declared.

"I didn't do anything of the kind!" retorted Stone. "I guess if you'll go far enough you might find that the cook could tell you who the guilty party is. What makes you think I did it?"

"Because it would be just like you. Tell me, did you do it, or didn't you?"

"I have spoken my piece," said Stone soberly.

"I'll make you tell!" shouted Perkins as he abruptly started toward the younger boy.

His action was so quick and unexpected and, indeed, so unlike any movement that might be expected from the awkward senior, that Stone was taken off his guard, and before he could open the door Perkins seized him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RESCUE

THE awkward senior, apparently wrought up to a high pitch of excitement by the suffering through which he had passed, as well as by the taunts of Stone, who was adept in the art of tormenting, suddenly displayed such anger that even Carlton was startled by the expression which appeared upon his face.

"I'll show you!" roared the angry senior. "You're not going to feed me on ipecac, and then expect that I'm going to be just as good to you as I was before. If I had a bottle of it here," he shouted, as he twisted the arm of the boy who was almost helpless in his grasp, "I would make you drink a quart! What did you do it for, anyway?"

"I didn't do it!" shouted Stone. "Ouch! Let me go!"

Suddenly wresting himself from the grasp of the older boy, Stone slipped from his hands and began to run about the room. The anger of Perkins increased. An expression of rage, such as alarmed even Carlton, appeared upon his face. Apparently the pent-up feelings of all the weeks were now manifesting themselves. His disappointments, mortifica-

Digitized by Google

tion, and the petty annoyances that only young boys know how to develop to perfection, his failure to be appreciated by his mates, his lack of success in the classroom, and, above all, the experiences through which he had passed the preceding night all seemed to unite in producing one wild, ungovernable burst of rage. Seizing a chair, he started in pursuit of the fleeing boy. Twice around the room they ran, and then Perkins brought the chair with a crash upon the floor, as he endeavored to strike little Stone.

Even the latter now was frightened. No word of fear or complaint escaped his lips, but he was doing his utmost to dodge his angry pursuer.

His efforts, however, apparently were vain, and the result of the chase was forgone unless some interruption occurred.

"Here, Perk!" called Carlton sharply. "Put up your chair!"

The suggestion was disregarded, and, dodging and jumping about, Perkins still continued in swift pursuit of the now terrified lad. Suddenly flinging aside the chair, Perkins succeeded in grasping Stone by his collar and, then lifting him abruptly from the floor, flung him hard upon the bed.

In a moment he prepared to throw himself upon him, but before he could act, he was abruptly seized by Carlton, who, with an exclamation of anger, flung him to the other side of the room.

Instantly rising, and now with his face showing

Digitized by Google

even a greater rage than before, if such a thing were possible, the wretched boy turned and ran toward Carlton.

"Look here, Perk," said Carlton in a low voice; "you're beside yourself! You don't know what you're doing! You wouldn't hit that little fellow."

"Yes, I would hit him, and I would hit you too!" roared Perkins. "I'm not going to stand everything! Everybody picks on me; I thought you were my friend, but you're as bad as the rest of them!"

In spite of his anger and his declarations, Perkins did not immediately offer to lay hands upon Stone.

The little fellow was still lying upon the bed, and his expression of alarm had given place to one of impish glee as he became aware that this older companion had now interfered in his behalf.

"Hey, Perk!" began Stone.

Instantly Carlton turned and said sharply: "You keep still! Better yet, Stone, you go out of this room! Go now, while you have a chance! I'm not going to stay here very long myself, and if you don't leave when it is possible for you to go you'll have to take the consequences."

The little fellow slid from the bed, carefully avoiding Perkins, though he did not turn away his eyes from the senior before he had safely gained the door he was seeking.

"Good-bye, Perk," then called Stone mockingly,

Digitized by Google

as he flung open the door. "What'll you have for your next course? Ipecac for me!"

His taunting calls suddenly ceased when Perkins ran toward the door. Before Carlton could seize him, the angry boy had turned into the hall and was in swift pursuit of the fleeing Stone. As the latter gained the head of the stairway, Perkins was close behind him, but as he was unable to seize him, he kicked him viciously and in such a way that Stone, afterward describing his experiences, said that he "touched only one of the stairs before he found himself at the bottom."

"Come back here, Perk!" called Carlton, who had entered the hall and was near the angry boy, who apparently was preparing to continue his pursuit.

For a moment, almost beside himself with rage, Perkins ignored the demand, but when it was repeated he glanced at his classmate and something he saw in the expression on his face induced him to obey.

"Now sit down there and calm yourself," ordered Carlton, when they were once more in Perkins' room. "You have succeeded in making a sublime fool of yourself! There will be some who will say you don't have to try very hard to do that, Perk; but I want you to look at this, if you can, in a sensible way. You haven't any one to blame but yourself for all this trouble. Redhead had no business to steal the pie, and you had no right to take it

Digitized by Google

from him. 'The partaker is as bad as the thief.' Mr. Hull warned the boys that something would happen if they didn't stop taking those pies which the cook left on the window-sill to cool for dinner."

"But it's dangerous——" broke in Perkins.

"That may be, but you'll live some time yet. There's no use in your blaming any one but yourself. Come up and face it like a man. Little Stone didn't have anything to do with the matter. Of course he's tormenting, and it's not very pleasant for a fellow to have some of his words thrown at him; but he isn't really guilty of anything, and you leave him alone."

"I sha'n't leave him alone!" said Perkins. "I'll show him when I get my hands on him, that he can't tease me and——"

"You won't do anything of the kind!" interrupted Carlton. "Whatever you do to Stone, I'll do to you. I'm going to stand up for the little fellow because there's no sense in your doing what you threaten to do. Besides all that, you'll advertise to the whole school just what a fool you have been, and you'll just suggest to the fellows of Stone's or Redhead's crowd something new to try on you. I'm talking to you as a friend. You've got to learn some of the lessons that a fellow gets outside the classroom. You must not forget that the boys are not to blame. They like the fellows who are likable. If you don't do very well in the classroom, the trouble isn't with the text-book or with the teacher—don't

Digitized by Google

forget that, either. You've been in hot water ever since you've been in school. Do you know," he suddenly added, "what I would do if I were you?"

"No," grumbled Perkins sullenly. He was not looking at his visitor, and it was manifest that the words of Carlton had not been received in any friendly spirit.

"I'd leave school," said Carlton quietly.

"You're a great one to talk, you are," growled Perkins; "you tell me to leave the school because the fellows don't like me. If that's a good reason, I don't know why you stay here any longer."

In the excitement of the past few minutes Carlton had forgotten his own experiences, and the ever-depressing sense of mortification had not been present. The petty charge of Perkins, however, instantly brought everything back to his mind, and for a moment he was almost dazed as he realized how true the charge really was.

After all, he thought somewhat bitterly, was there such a great difference between the two? He had been advising his companion to leave school, and had said that the reason why boys didn't like him better was because he wasn't likable. Perkins had thrown his words back upon him. Was it true? Carlton had tried to persuade himself that his own troubles had all been due to the envy of Anceps. He still believed that Anceps was jealous, but could his feelings account for all that had occurred since the Tait School had opened?

Digitized by Google

He was silent for a moment while these thoughts passed through his mind, before he said to Perkins: "Never mind me, Perk. I think I may be able to look after myself, but with you it's different."

"Why can't I look after myself too?"

"You show why you can't. The idea of a great, hulking fellow like you, six feet tall, trying to pick on a little fellow like Stone, who's not a bit over five feet two!"

"I didn't begin it. A man has a right to defend himself, and I'm going to have my rights. I think I shall sue Mr. Hull too. When I think how sick I was last night, I——" The recollection brought a distortion of the features of the awkward boy, and Carlton smiled in spite of his own uncomfortable feeling, which the countercharge of Perkins had aroused in his heart.

"Of course," he said, "I have no right to tell you what to do, but I know how some teachers feel about it, and I know you haven't any money to waste. The Tait School isn't any place for you, and the sooner you go home the better it will be for you!"

"How do you know that?" demanded Perkins loudly. "People that live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. The pot mustn't call the kettle black. When I see you willing to take a dose of your own medicine, perhaps I'll try some too."

Carlton blushed in spite of his effort to control himself, and said: "All right, Perkins. What I

Digitized by Google

said was meant all right. You'll do as you please, of course. I happen to know that some of the teachers feel just as I have——"

"Have they told you so?"

"Yes."

"I think I'll ask Mr. Hull and Mr. Reed what they think about your staying."

"That's your privilege," said Carlton quietly. "There's only one thing I want to say to you. I have a perfect right to say that because it concerns no one but ourselves. I don't want to hear of your having laid a finger on little Stone."

"I guess I'll do as I think best about that."

"You'll want to think twice, Perkins," continued Carlton quietly. "If Stone has any trouble with you, you'll have to reckon with me."

"You can't scare me! You needn't think I'm going to sit down here and let those bad boys bother me the way they are doing. They're regular little imps! The school ought not to allow them to do one of the things which they're doing."

"I guess you're right about that, Perk," said Carlton lightly, as he turned to depart from the room. "One of the things too, that ought to have been stopped was stealing the cook's pies. It would have saved you a good deal of trouble if you had known that before. Now, I'm trying to save you more trouble that's up ahead, and if you're wise you'll pay attention to what I'm saying. Don't lay the weight of your finger upon little Stone!"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX

A STARTLING REPORT

CARLTON hesitated before he departed from the room, waiting for Perkins to speak once more. He was hopeful that the boy now would have come to himself, and be willing to look at his recent unpleasant experiences in a more reasonable light.

Carlton could not repress a smile that arose to his lips as he glanced at the awkward senior, whose sufferings had been vociferously declared. The face of Perkins still was pale, and it required no description on his part to enable one to believe that the past hours had not been filled with joy. Ever thin, Perkins was so slight that some of the boys in the school had nicknamed him "Spike," while others had called him "String," and one of his classmates even had irreverently declared that Perkins "reminded him of a piece of spaghetti more than anything else."

At last, however, convinced that Perkins had nothing more to say at the time, Carlton quietly departed from the room. He did not repeat his warning, for he was hopeful that the word he had given would be heeded; and Carlton had meant too, what

Digitized by Google

he had said, as Perkins might have known if his wits had been a little more nimble.

The following day Stone reported to Carlton's room, and gleefully recounted the experiences of the preceding morning while he mimicked the sufferings of the awkward senior.

"If Perk would only look at it as Redhead does, he wouldn't have any more trouble," laughed Stone. "Redhead laughs with the boys, and so there isn't any fun in their laughing at him."

"I'm afraid that Perkins did not find there was much in his experience to laugh at," suggested Carlton with a smile.

"He certainly didn't when you and I were there. My! but I thought he had me there when he threw me on the bed."

"I guess he did," laughed Carlton. "That ought to teach you a lesson, Stone."

"What's that?"

"Why, not to make fun of fellows who don't understand your jokes."

"The trouble with Perkins is that he can't smile without making you think he's in pain. I never saw such a fellow."

"Stone," said Carlton more seriously, "did you ever stop to think of what it means to Perkins to be in school here?"

"I don't know that I have. What does it mean?"

"Why, that fellow has been working four years in the mill, going without the food he ought to have

Digitized by Google

had and skimping on his clothes, never spending a cent for pleasure, and working early and late just to get money enough to come to the Tait School."

"I didn't know that," said Stone, his round, black eyes opening in surprise. "What did he do it for?"

"He thinks that's the way, I guess," said Carlton, smiling slightly as he spoke. "He quotes to me the example of Daniel Webster and many fellows who have worked their way through——"

"Does he think he's going to be another Webster?"

The idea was so ridiculous to Stone that he threw back his head and laughed loudly. Even Carlton was compelled to join, for a vision of Perkins as ever being able to stir an audience by his oratory was beyond the power of either boy to conceive.

"Has he bothered you any, Stone?"

"Not a bit. Not a bit. He'll never bother me any more."

"Unless you bother him," suggested Carlton. "If you do I sha'n't take your part."

"I sha'n't bother him. What I did to Perkins was just for his own good," declared Stone drolly. "There are a good many things he needs besides the power of oratory. He wouldn't touch me after what you told him. It's a great thing for a fellow to have the best football player in the school take his part."

"I sha'n't take your part if you begin any of your impish tricks again."

Digitized by Google

"So I heard you remark," laughed Stone. "I haven't any impish tricks. I didn't put the ipecac in the pie. You ask Redhead if I did."

"There's one thing about it," broke in Carlton; "I'm sure Redhead didn't put it there."

"The trouble is not about putting the ipecac into the pie, but putting the pie into Redhead. It didn't stay there long, though," and Stone began to laugh again at his recollection of the distressed countenance of his roommate when the effect of the drug first became manifest.

"Stone," said Carlton soberly, "don't ever try any more of those things. You don't know what might happen. If some fellow should take a dose of that kind it might be as bad for him as the worst dose of poison."

"Oh, I guess ipecac never hurt anybody," remarked Stone lightly. "My mother used to give it to me as far back in the dim past as my mind is able to go. And now look at me!"

When the boy was gone, Carlton, after he had seated himself before his desk, sat for a few moments with his head resting on his hands, thinking not merely of his own troubles, but of the heroic worship of little Stone. He understood his feelings because he had cherished a similar regard for Dan Richards.

Poor old Dan! He had had troubles of his own too. Only a few of the fellows he knew remembered these things now. His prowess as a pitcher

Digitized by Google

and his complete ability to control his own feelings both were very expressive to the impulsive Carlton. Almost unconsciously he was doing his utmost to follow the example of the former senior. According to the occasional letters that came from Dan, experiences in college were not unlike those which he had encountered in the Tait School. He was popular in his quiet way, and was on the freshman football eleven and the undisputed pitcher of his class nine. It would require more time for Dan to make his power felt amongst the students of the college. That ultimately he would attain the place he deserved, Carlton had no question.

Meanwhile his own problems were perplexing. The good words of his fellows had been to him like a tonic. Unmoved by his election to positions of prominence—that is, unmoved so far as any manifestation of his feelings was concerned—Carlton had been undemonstrative in his attitude toward his classmates and the younger boys in the Tait School.

Now, however, when he had been robbed of his position, for Carlton looked upon his displacement as being a robbery on the part of Anceps, it was more difficult for him to maintain the same attitude. Indeed, he had a feeling that now he was somewhat on the defensive. Before he was aware, he was keenly watching the faces of the boys in the same seat in chapel with him, or whenever he chanced to meet the students about the school grounds.

The effect of all this was not altogether good,

Digitized by Google

and the light-hearted boy was becoming somewhat morbid and inclined to scoff at the enduring power of school friendships. If a fellow like Anceps, he frequently declared angrily to himself, could swing the sentiment of the school to himself, what hope was there for a fellow who tried to be straight in every way, and did his best in every position in which he had been placed?

Abruptly Carlton thought that his present position also was one in which he had been "placed." He must show himself not unduly cast down. Perhaps, as Mr. Reed had suggested to him, the experience might be one which in the end would add to his strength.

It was a comfort to the troubled Carlton to realize the estimation in which he was held by his devoted admirer, Stone. More and more the senior had quietly withdrawn from the life of the school. Accepting him on his own terms, gradually his classmates had been leaving him more and more to himself.

Even Fletcher, who had been his most intimate friend, no longer came to his room, and whenever the two boys met, as they frequently did, because their names began with initials that were near together in the alphabet, the fact which determined the seating arrangement in the classroom, their words were not unfriendly, but were few.

Meanwhile the life of the Tait School moved steadily on, and the time was drawing near for the

Digitized by Google

deciding game among the schools of the league. In former years the contest between the Tait School and the Military Academy had been the deciding game. How much of a contest there would be this year was still a question. The Tait School eleven had steadily improved. There were reports from the rival institution that their team too had suffered a loss through the graduation of their best players in the preceding year.

The trees in the valley and on the hillsides now were stripped of their leaves. The gorgeous coloring, which came every autumn, this year had failed to find a response in Carlton's heart, though in preceding years he had never failed to be stirred by the wonderful sight. The valley was preparing for the coming of winter.

On the football team Carlton was doing better work, he was convinced, than ever he had done before. It was something of an antidote to his feelings to throw himself with all his heart into the practice. In the action of the games with other schools, he was the one outstanding player whose success twice saved the eleven from defeat.

This activity, together with his constantly increasing feeling of responsibility for little Stone, who was clinging more tightly to him than ever, was of great aid to the troubled senior in striving to hold himself to a quiet course.

As the weeks passed and Stone still reported that Perkins had not molested him, the feeling of the

Digitized by Google

awkward senior toward the younger boy must have been changed, or passed entirely, Carlton concluded. The "joke" of the "ipecac pie," of course, had soon become known throughout the school, and both Redhead and the older victim had not been free from the derisive remarks of their companions.

Fond as Carlton was of Stone, it was a source of satisfaction to him to know that his own directions to Perkins had caused the latter to leave the little fellow unmolested. Perhaps Carlton assumed too much in ascribing the cause to his own positive directions. Whether or not that was the true cause, up to the present time Stone had not met with any unpleasant experiences, and Perkins apparently had ignored or forgotten his threat. Neither of the boys, however, knew the strange senior. His peculiar actions had now returned, and he had not been seen much outside of the classrooms for several weeks. Perhaps it would have been better for Carlton and his protégé if they had not been unduly confident.

Carlton tried to strengthen his own determination not to betray any feeling of weakness to the school. As far as Anceps was concerned, relations with him were quiet and infrequent. Indeed, Carlton was doing his utmost to avoid all interviews with the present captain, not even yet being convinced that he would be able to refrain from stating what was in his mind if occasion should arise.

The time for the game with the Military Academy

Digitized by Google

" 'Anceps says that if our team loses it'll be because you throw the game' "

Page 187

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

had almost arrived. The academy team was expected the following day in order to get there in time for the preparation for the contest the next afternoon. For some strange reason Carlton found that he had slight interest in the game. He was determined to do his utmost, but the strong feeling of excitement which prevailed found no response in his heart.

"Hey, there, Carlton!"

The senior looked behind him quickly as he recognized the voice of Stone, and then waited for the little fellow to join him. "Do you know what Anceps says?" inquired Stone eagerly.

"About what?"

"'Bout you and this game with the academy eleven."

"No, I don't know what he said. Are you sure you do?"

"You're right I do! Anceps says that if our team loses it'll be because you throw the game."

"I don't believe he said that!" said Carlton, stopping abruptly and looking into the face of his companion.

"He certainly did."

"Did you hear him yourself?"

"Yes, sir; I did."

"Where?"

"Not ten minutes ago down on the steps of the post-office."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XX

CARLTON WILL NOT PLAY

CARLTON stopped abruptly and, looking keenly into the face of his young companion, seized him by the shoulder as he demanded, "Say that again!"

"I saw Anceps not more than ten minutes ago down on the steps of the post-office talking to a lot of fellows."

"And he said that I would throw the game with the academy eleven?"

"That's what he said."

"You heard him yourself?"

"Yes."

"Come back with me, and we'll make him eat his words!" exclaimed Carlton, turning as he spoke in the direction of the place where his rival had been reported to be, at the same time compelling little Stone to come with him.

"Don't make me go!" begged the latter. "Anceps will kill me!"

"I think you'll survive," said Carlton bitterly. "You're worse than a cat, and have ten lives anyway."

"But he will!" pleaded Stone. "Please let me

Digitized by Google

go! The other fellows heard him just the same as I did. You ask them."

"All right. You keep out of it, then," said Carlton, releasing his grasp on his companion's shoulder and bidding him go about his business.

The senior rapidly began to walk toward the place where Anceps had been reported to be, and not glancing behind him in his anger, was not aware that at a distance his recent companion was discreetly following him.

When Carlton drew near the post-office he saw that a group of a dozen or more Tait boys was seated on the steps, and that all apparently were listening intently to what one who was seated in their midst was saying.

As Carlton approached, a low warning did not escape his ears, and it did not require any effort for him to understand that he himself had been the topic of conversation.

To his delight, he saw Anceps in the midst of the group, and immediately conjectured that he was the one who had been haranguing his companions.

Carlton's anger was manifest not only in his face, but also in his bearing, as he drew near. He smiled somewhat bitterly when he saw that Anceps, startled by his unexpected appearance, apparently was on the point of departing from the spot. The captain, however, evidently thinking better of his purpose, remained in his place, and boldly returned the angry look which Carlton gave him.

Digitized by Google

"What's that you're saying, Anceps?" Carlton demanded.

"I was saying a good many things," replied Anceps quietly.

"And no two of them agree," almost shouted Carlton; "you deserve your name all right! Now what I want of you is to say to my face what you've been saying behind my back."

"What have I been saying?"

"You know better than I do. Now I want you to screw your courage up to say it to my face."

"What do you think I said?"

It was plain to Carlton that his rival was trying to evade the issue. The knowledge strengthened the young senior's determination to compel the captain of the eleven to say plainly what he had insinuated or implied in his preceding conversation. The ex-captain was thoroughly aroused. He was indignant that accusations, such as Stone had reported, had been given out by Anceps.

"I understand," he began quietly, "that you have said that I might throw the game with the academy team. Did you say that?" he demanded sharply, as Anceps at first made no reply.

"What if I did?"

"That comes later. What I want to know now is whether or not you said it. Did you?" he continued, as Anceps still was silent.

The group was looking first at one boy and then at the other; some apparently enjoying the prospect

Digitized by Google

of serious trouble, while others were somewhat alarmed at the attitude of the two seniors.

"Yes, I said it," said Anceps, finally speaking in a loud tone as if he was striving by this manner to increase his courage. "Now what are you going to do about it?" he added.

"I'm going to make you eat your words," said Carlton quietly.

"That's very easily said."

"You'll find it's just as easily done. Now, will you please explain why you made that remark?"

"It's true," retorted Anceps. "I'm not the only one that's afraid of it, either. All the fellows in the school are expecting you to throw the game."

"That remains to be seen. They won't expect me to if I don't play, will they?"

Even Anceps was startled by the implied threat. That there was no one to take his place, Carlton himself well understood. He was acknowledged to be not only the best half-back, but the best player on the eleven. His loss would be severely felt.

"Then you're going to play the baby act, are you?" sneered Anceps.

"It doesn't make any difference what you call it. You say all the fellows are saying that I'm going to throw the game. If I don't play you'll have a chance to show that I didn't."

"Nobody said anything about you not playing."

"I said something about it."

"You don't mean to say, do you," demanded

Digitized by Google

Anceps sneeringly, "that just because you're not the captain of the team any longer that you won't play the game?"

"No, I never said anything like that."

"Didn't he, fellows?" demanded Anceps, turning to the assemblage as he spoke. "Didn't Carl say that he wouldn't play?"

"I said nothing of the kind," spoke up Carlton, before any of his companions could reply. "All I said was that if you were afraid that I would throw the game it might relieve your feelings if you put some one in my place."

"But we haven't any one to put in your place," spoke up Fletcher. "You know that just as well as we do, Carl. There isn't another such half-back in the Tait School. We may lose the game even if you do play; but if you don't, we're sure to lose it."

"What about me?" demanded Carlton bitterly. "You say you want me to play, and yet you say in the same breath that you're afraid I'll throw the game."

"I didn't say anything of the kind," retorted Fletcher. "Not one of the fellows who knows you believes anything of the kind. If you go into the game you're in to do your best, I know you are."

For a moment Carlton did not speak. He was far more deeply affected than Fletcher understood by the praise of his classmate. In former days he had been so accustomed to receive the warm commendation of the school that it had become almost a

Digitized by Google

necessity in his life. He acknowledged it had meant more than he had realized until he had been put out of his position and placed upon the defensive, as he believed, in the eyes of the whole school.

"It's good of you to say so, Fletcher," he said at last. "But the captain of the eleven says the whole school thinks as he does."

"That's just one of Anceps' spells," drawled Fletcher. "You ought to know him well enough not to pay attention to him. Come on, Carl, play the game!"

"Let him crawl, if he wants to," said Anceps. "I don't go down on my knees to anybody. I wouldn't beg the best player in the Tait School. I wouldn't beg the best man in the whole school to play if he waited for me to urge him to come on. If he doesn't care enough about the success of the eleven to do his part, then there isn't any use in asking him to do anything more."

"Anceps," said Fletcher quietly, "the best thing you can do is to go up to your room and lock the door. Just as long as you're with any of the fellows you'll say something, and whatever you say will be wrong."

The captain looked up quickly at the speaker, and perhaps it was what he saw in his expression that suddenly caused him to decide to withdraw from the place. At all events, Anceps turned abruptly and, without any further word to any one, walked toward South Hall.

Digitized by Google

"You don't mean what you said, Carl," said Brown, one of the most ardent of his former friends. "I should feel like quitting myself if I thought you wouldn't play."

Carlton smiled as he looked at the speaker, but did not reply.

"You must play!" joined in Carr. "We can't get along without you! We all know you haven't been treated right, but it's not the time for you to run now. Every fellow in the school expects you to do your part."

"What about my expecting every fellow in the school to do his part?" retorted Carlton. He was sorry the moment the words had escaped his lips, but he made no apology and turned as if he were about to depart.

The outcries and the pleadings of his companions continued, and quickly surrounding him in a body they begged him not to fulfil his implied threat.

At last Carlton said: "I'm perfectly willing to play the game, but I simply can't with such a charge as that hanging over me. Whatever I do will be wrong. If I slip on the field, somebody will say that I have greased my soles on purpose. If I don't make a good run it will be said that I was holding back. No, I won't play under such a charge."

"Suppose Anceps takes it back?" suggested Fletcher.

"He'll have to do it as publicly as he made the charge," declared Carlton angrily.

Digitized by Google

"What do you mean?" asked Fletcher. "Do you want him to get up in chapel? Do you think he ought to come over here on the steps and make a declaration to the housetops? No, Carl; you haven't been treated right; I know a little how you feel, but you'll make the mistake of your young life if you lie down now. Don't you do it! I'm talking more for your own sake than I am for the school."

Carlton said no more, and at once departed. Without looking behind, he was aware that the boys were excitedly talking to one another, and his heart was not altogether heavy as he realized that what he had said had produced a fresh excitement in the Tait School. That the feeling would be more pronounced the following day he was well assured. In his selfish anger he said to himself that he was not the cause of the trouble, and there was nothing else for him to do except to take the stand he had taken in the presence of Anceps.

Alone in his room, the disheartened boy fought his battle all over again. Was it playing the "baby act" for him to refuse to play in the game with the Military Academy? Was he not amply justified in saying what he did? Whatever he did would be wrong if he should take his place as half-back. The time had come for him to stand upon his dignity and assert himself.

Convinced by his own arguments, Carlton at last said to himself that there was no reason why his decision should be changed.

Digitized by Google

His expectation that there would be keen excitement in the Tait School when his announcement became thoroughly known was amply fulfilled. The following day when, with his classmates, he departed from the school chapel the boys who had held themselves aloof several weeks now came about him, attempting to resume their former friendly ways and urging him not to refuse to play. Nor was the pleading confined to a few. A cheer greeted him when he passed the boys of the lowest form, among whom he had stood as a hero throughout the earlier weeks of the school year. Even the little fellows were of one mind that there was no one to take his place as left half-back.

To all these appeals Carlton made no response. Anceps did not speak to him, and until Anceps had withdrawn his accusation Carlton said to himself that the position he had taken was correct, and that he should abide by what he had said.

Not even an interview which Mr. Reed had with him that evening served to shake his determination. Indeed, when he had explained to the teacher, whom he most respected, the reasons for his decision, even Mr. Reed withdrew a part of his objections, and said it was a matter which the young senior himself must decide.

In this way matters remained until the night preceding the great game.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXI

ANOTHER PROPOSITION

IN the hour between dinner and study-time Carlton was surprised to receive a visit from Fletcher and three of his teammates. The four boys manifestly were ill at ease when they entered his room, but the apparent unconcern of the ex-captain soon made the visitors more ready to talk.

Their uneasiness also soon disappeared, and it was a distinct relief to Carlton, at least, to feel that he was talking more or less familiarly with those who had been among his warmest friends.

"Anceps declares he won't apologize," said Fletcher. "The whole school is divided. Some of the fellows insist upon his giving up his position and other fellows are just as eager to have you play on the team against the Military Academy."

"You'll do that, won't you?" asked Webb eagerly.

"Of course you will," said Fletcher anxiously. "We just can't play without you, Carl! I know how you feel, and we have done our best to make Anceps take back what he said. You know what his name is, though, and the fellow who has two faces usually has two tongues."

Digitized by Google

"I don't know why we were such fools as to let him work himself in as captain," said Webb. "The team wasn't doing very well, no one can deny that, and when Anceps and the coach thought that if a change should be made, it might improve the work, why, we all of us gave in. It was a big mistake. The team hasn't done nearly as well as it did before."

"It wasn't the fault of the captain. The team isn't much good, anyway," broke in Fletcher. "We haven't the material to make the eleven of last year. You can't 'make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.' Carlton, here, and Webb are about the only fellows that can be depended upon. Of course Anceps is a good player, though he's no star."

"Feeling sorry for what you did doesn't change the facts," said Carlton quietly.

"I know that," acknowledged Fletcher, "and I'm just as sorry for it as you are. But what are we going to do about it?"

"I don't see that you can do anything."

"And that means?"

"You know what it means, Fletcher," replied Carlton quietly.

"Of course I know," broke in Fletcher eagerly, too eagerly in fact to indicate that he was at all confident that his assertion would commend itself. "Of course I know," he repeated. "You're going to stand up like a man and take your place on the team and do your part."

Digitized by Google

Carlton smiled and did not reply.

"You'll play in this game, won't you, Carl?" begged Webb.

"On one condition."

"What is that?"

"You know what that is without my telling you."

"Do you mean that Anceps must apologize?"

"I'm not strong for what you call an 'apology,'" said Carlton quietly, "but when the captain of the eleven made such a statement as he did publicly, I don't see how he, or you, for that matter, can expect me to go into the game."

"Carlton," said Fletcher in a low voice which betrayed his deep feeling, "if we put Anceps out of his position as captain, then will you play?"

"No," replied Carlton warmly. "You mustn't put him out of his position, anyway. At least, if you did, it wouldn't do me any good. It would look then as if what he said was true—that I wasn't playing simply because I wasn't captain any longer."

"But if we get the fellows together to-night and call a regular meeting of the eleven, and elect you captain in place of Anceps, that will show what the feeling of the fellows is."

"No, I don't believe it would," said Carlton, shaking his head as he spoke. "It would look as if it had been done under pressure. Besides, if you should put Anceps out and put me in, then he might feel just as you seem to think I do. No, fellows, the trouble isn't because I have been put out of office. Of course

Digitized by Google

I don't like that, and I'll own up now that I don't think it was a square deal, but that's neither here nor there. The captain of the team has said that if I play in the game to-morrow, I'll throw it. Now, I'm very much afraid the Military Academy is going to win to-morrow, no matter who plays, and if the Tait School loses, naturally a good many of the fellows will think that I'm the cause if I play."

"Carlton, there won't anybody think so after he has seen you in that game to-morrow," suggested Webb.

"He certainly won't have any chance to think that way if I don't play."

"And you won't play?" demanded Fletcher.

"Not unless the captain of the team takes back what he said. He made the charge in public against me, and he'll have to take it back in public or get somebody to play left half-back in the game to-morrow."

"You're making the mistake of your life, Carl," said Fletcher almost angrily. "Here we are standing by you——"

"Standing by me now," broke in Carlton a little bitterly.

"Yes, standing by you now," continued Fletcher. "We're sorry for what we did, but we're going to forget it, and let bygones be bygones. We're doing our best to put you back as captain, and do it this very night too, but you won't let us. Then we are

Digitized by Google

begging of you to take your place in the game and not pay too much attention to what Anceps has said. Everybody knows him, and though he is a pretty fair player, we all understand that he's no star. What we want is for you to say that you'll go into the game and do your best; then, if Anceps has anything to say after the game, why, we'll have it out with him. That isn't anything we'll have to be responsible for. We're trying to show you that we're your friends, and we don't want you to go back on us again."

"I didn't know that I had gone back on you," suggested Carlton quietly. "It seems to me that somebody had gone back on me."

"Cut all that!" said Fletcher sharply. "Will you play or won't you?"

"I have told you."

"You mean you won't play?"

"I don't mean anything of the kind," said Carlton. "I have explained to you that unless Anceps publicly takes back what he said about my throwing the game, then he'll have to get somebody to take my place. I've talked it over with Mr. Reed, and he agrees with me. I simply will not play on a team after the captain has said that if the game is lost it will be because I've thrown it."

"Good night," said Fletcher brusquely, quickly rising and departing from the room, an example which was followed by his three companions.

For a brief time a feeling of depression again

Digitized by Google

swept over the troubled senior. The friendly words of Fletcher and his other visitors had meant much more to Carlton than at first he had realized. Knowing, however, that his friends depended to a large extent upon Carlton in the coming game, for a moment it had seemed to him that the bitter days all had passed and that once more his friendly relations were to be resumed.

The anger of Fletcher, however, upon his departure implied that once more he was likely to be compelled to endure the reproach of his classmates. Without question, thought Carlton, Fletcher had believed he was doing a generous act in offering to do his utmost to oust Adams from his position as captain of the Tait School eleven. When this offer had been declined, his eagerness for his classmate to continue in his position on the eleven was so manifest that there was no doubt of his genuine feeling. Now the reaction again had come and Carlton was aware that many and perhaps serious troubles awaited him if he still continued to abide by his decision.

The following morning gave promise of an ideal day for the game. When Carlton first looked out of his bedroom window and saw the great clouds hovering about the summits of the hills which shut in the valley in which the Tait School was located, there was a thrill in his heart. A moment later, however, when he recalled the decision he had made the familiar feelings of depression returned.

Digitized by Google

Carlton had decided that he would not play in the game.

There was a partly surpressed air of excitement in the school when he took his accustomed place in chapel. He was conscious that the eyes of many were turned toward him, not only questioningly, but anxiously.

Not unnaturally the troubled boy was elated by the manifest desire on the part of the school for him to play left half-back in the approaching game. Sweet as the feeling was, his position was unchanged, and in response to many questions which were asked him when the boys filed out of the chapel to their various recitation-rooms, his uniform reply was simply to shake his head, though he did so smilingly. He half expected Anceps would come to him, but the captain, true to his word, did not approach him.

In the afternoon, from his window, Carlton watched the crowd that was steadily moving toward the athletic field. The great contest of the school league had arrived. This was manifest from the crowded condition of the streets and the steadiness with which the lines of people were moving in one direction.

The temptation to run to the dressing-room and don his uniform was almost irresistible. Indeed, Carlton even turned toward the door. It was not yet too late. The teams were only in their preliminary practice, and he was confident that if he should

Digitized by Google

appear in uniform on the gridiron his coming would be hailed with a shout, not only from his teammates, but by the assembled people, all of whom were aware that he was easily recognized as the foremost player in the school.

When he recalled the words of Anceps, however, as well as his expression when he spoke, Carlton stopped abruptly and resumed his seat by the window.

At last only a few stragglers were to be seen upon the streets. Looking at his watch, Carlton was aware that the time of the game had arrived. At that moment a faint sound of a cheer came from the athletic field. It was almost like a summons to the troubled boy. Try as he might not to heed the temptation, his strength was scarcely equal to the test. Taking his cap he at once departed from his room and walked rapidly toward the field. When he entered, his arrival was not noticed at first, and almost chagrined by his failure to receive the attention which he believed his coming would arouse, Carlton made his way to a section of the seats that had been reserved for the boys of the Tait School. Seating himself he looked out upon the field and saw that Anceps and the rival captain were preparing to make their toss for the choice of position.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXII

THE GAME

THE Tait School had won the kick-off. The players were running to take their positions on the field, but Carlton found it difficult in his heart to decide whether or not he rejoiced or sympathized with the members of the Tait School team. As he looked critically at their opponents, he saw that their average weight was at least ten pounds more than that of his own school team, and by their very actions they showed that they were better drilled in the essentials of the game.

In his own position Carlton saw that Webb was to play. He smiled somewhat bitterly, for he was confident in a quiet way that his classmate was unable to fill the position as he himself would have done. He had no feeling of ill will toward Webb, who had been most urgent in begging him to take his regular position on the team.

The hush which had fallen over the crowd when the young athletes, excited and eager for the contest, had assumed their positions was broken by the shrill whistle of the referee. In a moment Fletcher advanced and sent the ball high in the air and well toward the goal of the Military Academy.

Digitized by Google

When the eager young players started to follow, Carlton smiled when he saw the Military Academy player catch the ball and dodging in and out, with superb interference, carry the ball back twenty-five yards before he was downed. The shrill voices of the academy boys rose in a treble cheer at the success of their representative.

Carlton, however, ignored the enthusiasm of the supporters of the rival eleven and closely watched the members of his own team, as they speedily lined up. He laughed slightly when, after the ball had been snapped back, one of the academy half-backs circled the left-end of the opposing team and gained at least five yards before he was downed. Even after he had been tackled he still struggled and stumbled forward and laughed when at last, shaking his long hair, he arose from beneath the mass of players which had been piled upon him.

"It's straight football the academy fellows are playing," said some one near Carlton. He nodded his head as if the words had been spoken to him, for it was manifest now that the academy eleven were simply trying to hammer their way through their opponents down the field. Their superior weight gave them a very pronounced advantage in this style of play, and it was not long before the Tait School boys were beginning to show the effect of the vigorous pounding their line was receiving.

There was a brief delay when from out of the tangled mass of players Anceps was lifted and then

Digitized by Google

stretched upon his back by his supporters, while water was poured upon his face, and his hands and his arms were rubbed vigorously.

"He's only winded," said some one, and once more Carlton nodded his head as if he were engaged in conversation.

Speedily the game was resumed, and still without resorting to any tricks or varying their plays the academy eleven steadily forced their way down the field, pushing the opposing line before them.

"They're just trying to wear them out by brute force," said the voice once more.

"It doesn't look as if they would have to try very hard," suggested another.

Carlton glanced quickly behind him to discover who the speakers were, but instantly resumed his position, watching closely every play that was made.

The Tait School contingent was cheering noisily, though it was manifest there was little enthusiasm in their efforts. Not once did the school eleven secure the ball. Steadily and irresistibly their opponents were driving them before them, and it was manifest to all the spectators that it was only a question of a brief time before the goal-line would be crossed.

Carlton was too excited to join in the noisy shouts. Indeed, he was only partly aware of what was going on about him, so intent was he in watching the movements on the field.

It was manifest that the reports of the slump in

Digitized by Google

the academy eleven had been greatly exaggerated or had no foundation in fact. At all events they were playing a marvelously steady and consistent game.

"First down again," called the voice behind Carlton. "Only two to make it. They make something with every rush. A lot of schoolgirls would make a better showing than our eleven!"

The comments were not lost upon Carlton, but strange to say, now his sympathies were all on the side of his former teammates. There were moments when he felt that he must rush upon the field and help some of the players.

Once, when the academy eleven fumbled the ball, he rose and shouted with his companions, and then resumed his seat, recalling how often he had rebuked the school for cheering an opponent's error.

Carlton was aware also that Anceps was playing as never before. He was in the midst of every scrimmage, and his efforts apparently were unremitting. He called to his teammates, slapped some of them encouragingly upon the back, and tried to arouse their enthusiasm.

All that he did was vain, however, for steadily down the field swept the heavier team, and without the Tait School having once secured possession of the ball; at last they stood upon the five-yard line. The following play carried them across the goal-line, the resistance of the opposing eleven being utterly unable to stem the tremendous rush the academy team now made.

Digitized by Google

When the goal was kicked and the score accordingly stood six to nothing, Carlton's excitement rose still higher. Apparently the boy was unaware of his surroundings. He had eyes only for the doings of the players before him. He was standing erect now, but still would not join in the cheering by which the supporters of the Tait School eleven were trying to instil some new life into their representatives.

What was worse than the cheering of the assemblage, however, was the laughter which now was heard in several quarters. Never before in his recollection had Carlton known the Tait School team to provide a subject of mirth for their rivals. The sound angered the young senior, and turning sharply behind him he glared at the boys who had dared to manifest their feelings in such a manner. The expression of his face caused the younger boys instantly to become silent, but although the laughter died away there still were many expressions that did not tend to soothe the feelings of the ex-captain.

"It's a snap." "A walkover." "Call in the first-form boys," jeered different ones. "They'll make a better stand than these fellows."

"They can't do any worse," laughed another one in response.

To be outplayed was hard, but to arouse the derision of the spectators was hardest of all to bear. As Carlton glanced behind him once more he was aware that the feeling was prevalent, and there was

Digitized by Google

slight sympathy for the team which had thus far made such a sorry spectacle of its ability.

In the midst of it all he was surprised to find that his feelings were somewhat tinged with sympathy for Anceps. In spite of the dealings of the double-faced boy, Carlton was confident that he understood fully how the boy was suffering at the time. Mortification, as well as chagrin, was hard to bear. Hardest of all was it to hear the sounds of laughter from those who had looked confidently to the team to make a creditable exhibition of itself in the contest which for years had ranked as the one that was supreme in the schedule. Not since Carlton had been a member of the Tait School had the academy won a football game. In the baseball contests they had claimed the pennant for five successive years until Captain Dan Richards had entered the Tait School and quickly put an end to their successes.

The game at this moment, however, was resumed and once more the Tait School had the kick-off.

There were cries and laughter among the spectators when the fleetest back of the academy eleven, securing the ball, tucked it under his arm, and, successfully evading the outstretched arms of his opponents, ran the entire length of the field for a touchdown without once being downed.

The score against the Tait School had been doubled in less than three minutes! Such a condition was almost unbearable, and Carlton was becoming desperate.

Digitized by Google

For the third time the Tait School eleven kicked off, but the efforts of Webb proved to be a failure. Whether his weakness was due to his excitement or to his anxiety was unknown. Whatever the cause, the ball dribbled along the ground, and was speedily taken up by the left-end of the academy team. However, as he was downed almost in his tracks, a faint cheer arose from the section of the bleachers where the Tait School boys were seated. But there was no stopping the confident team of the Military Academy. They had scored so easily that now they almost despised their opponents. This feeling of overconfidence perhaps manifested itself for a brief time, and was the cause of the academy eleven losing the ball for the first time thus far in the game. Eagerly Carlton watched his teammates to discover what they would be able to do now that they had assumed the offensive.

How easily he recognized the play which was being planned. He saw Anceps take his position somewhat to the right of the quarter-back and not so far in his rear as was customary.

The ball was snapped back, but even the interest of Carlton was interrupted as he became aware of a fresh cause of excitement which suddenly had arisen.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIII

A NOISY SUMMONS

FROM the seats behind him Carlton heard a shrill voice calling him by name. Glancing quickly in the direction from which he heard the unexpected sound he saw Perkins standing upon the bench, where he previously had been seated, waving his arms like a windmill and shouting in his loudest tones: "Hall! Hall! Carlton Hall! We want Carl! We want Carl!"

Inclined as Carlton was to laugh at the unexpected sound of the voice of the awkward senior, he was startled when a moment later the call was taken up at first by a few, and then followed by others until it seemed as if almost the entire assemblage was joining in the summons.

"Hall! Hall! We want Hall! We want Hall!"

The ex-captain's face blushed scarlet as he heard the expression of the confidence of his fellows. In spite of his own feelings, however, he was for a moment more fully aware of the appearance which Perkins presented than he was even of the monotonous chant which he was leading:

"Hall! Hall! We want Hall! Hall! Hall!"

Digitized by Google

" Waving his arms like a windmill and shouting "

Page 212

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Never had the senior appeared more awkward than at the present time. His hair was streaming in the strong breeze which was blowing, and Carlton was inclined to believe what Redhead frequently had declared, that " Perkins must have conscientious scruples against cutting his hair, for he had not let a barber touch it since he had been in the school." His clothing showed the effect of the wear to which it had been subjected, and the boy was even thinner, if such a thing were possible, than when he had first entered the Tait School.

Again Carlton looked behind him, and was scarcely conscious of what it all meant. He was dimly aware that the eyes of every one seemed to be fixed upon him.

As the assembly became aware that he was looking backward a fresh burst of enthusiasm was manifested, and the call for him to enter the game was repeated in tones still louder than before.

The troubled boy turned and looked out over the field where the players were already struggling in the early part of the second half. The experiences of the first half, however, apparently were about to be repeated. The Tait School had lost the ball in the second scrimmage, and their opponents, with the coveted football once more in full possession, were preparing to repeat their steady and triumphant advances across the gridiron.

Carlton was convinced that the summons which he had heard must have been heard also by the

Digitized by Google

members of the school team. For a moment he watched Anceps closely to discover if the captain betrayed any evidences of his having heard the unexpected cries. To all appearances Anceps either did not hear or did not intend to heed the shout which still went up from the boys of the Tait School!

"Hall! Hall! We want Hall! Hall! Hall! We want Hall!" The cries had become monotonous, and the young spectators with their feet were keeping time in unison with their shrill voices.

At times the summons was almost peremptory, as if the student body was not to be denied. If Anceps, however, was aware of the feeling, he still betrayed no evidences and was throwing himself with all his powers into the hopeless contest in which the team of which he was captain was engaged.

At the end of the first half the score had been twenty-four to nothing. There were manifestly no signs that the second half would show any improvement over the first, at least as far as the Tait School eleven was concerned. The line was unable to hold the rushes of their heavier opponents, and their work was becoming almost mechanical. The snap and enthusiasm which had marked their efforts in the early part of the game were gone. They were beaten, and though they still fought on, it was with the manner of those who were hopeless of gaining any advantage.

Carlton Hall was not unlike other boys, and his

Digitized by Google

heart was stirred by the continued call which came for him to enter the game. He was confident now that the shouts had been heard on the gridiron also because several of the eleven turned for a moment toward the assembly and beckoned with their hands, though they did not know where the young ex-captain was seated.

And Carlton was tempted. His heart cried out to meet the summons, and the hopeless fight of the boys, whom he had led in so many games, strongly appealed to him. It was good to hear once more the words of approval and appreciation. The blood in his veins was tingling in his excitement. For a moment he hesitated, and almost stepped toward the field.

Abruptly, however, he stopped, and as he once more seated himself, he was closely observing Anceps. As yet the captain had shown no signs that he had heard. "He's not two-faced now, anyway," said Carlton to himself. "He doesn't turn either of his faces this way." He was aware that Anceps not merely could be two-faced, but that also on certain occasions he could be as dogged and obstinate as if he was not at all fickle in other ways. It was with a sense of anger and keen disappointment that Carlton realized at last that Anceps would make no move toward appealing for him to take his place with the team.

Carlton instantly decided that he would not play unless his successor should ask him. The call of the

Digitized by Google

assembly was a far different matter from the invitation of the captain. Besides, the young senior was not without a feeling of bitterness, even as he heard the clamor of his schoolmates. The entire school had supported Anceps in his efforts to supplant him, and was not without blame for ousting him from his position. "They made their bed, let them lie in it,'" said Carlton grimly to himself.

A moment later, however, ashamed of the feeling which had swept over him, he was still eager to share in what he knew was to be the last contest on the football field in his school career. Hopelessly he watched Anceps. Carlton knew also that if he should not respond to the clamor calling him to the field now, his refusal was certain to be misunderstood. What could the troubled boy do?

Acting as most wise men do, under similar circumstances, Carlton waited in his seat and made no response to the calls of the noisy spectators. And the crowd steadily was becoming more noisy. The Military Academy by this time had scored twice in the second half, and the summons for Carlton to "get into the game" redoubled in volume. Perkins was supremely happy. Carlton was compelled to smile as he saw the exertions of his ungainly classmate. Perhaps the eloquence of D. Webster had been inherited and now was manifesting itself. At all events the face of Perkins was glowing and his excitement was intense as he wildly waved both arms and led the cheering sections. Unconscious

Digitized by Google

of, or ignoring, the laughter of many of the people in the assembly, Perkins summoned his fellows to continued efforts and noisily demanded the return of Carlton Hall to the field.

Carlton still remained seated, and to the repeated calls of his fellows simply shook his head. It was not long before he was aware of the change in the tones and the manner of the spectators. He heard expressions from some of them which did not appeal to his pride. "Just obstinate." "He trains, but he won't play." "He must be captain, or he won't go into the game." These and similar expressions now were occasionally heard, but they simply caused the troubled boy to remain unchanged in his decision. And yet there still remained a hope that 'Anceps would be compelled by the demands of the assembly to come to him and invite him to take the place which belonged to him on the field.

However, Anceps still did not betray any evidence that he either heard the calls, or intended to heed them if he did hear. The noisy shouts were decreasing in volume. Even the assembly was becoming tired of voicing its noisy invitation to one who would not heed.

A feeling of anger came into Carlton's heart, for he was fully aware now that he would be blamed whatever he might do. If he should take his former position as half-back, the followers of Anceps would taunt him by saying that he had not stayed out of the game after all his strong talk. On the other

Digitized by Google

hand, after the crowd had shown its appreciation and expressed its desire he would be given credit for obstinacy in refusing, rather than for adhering to any principle, as the conscientious boy believed he was doing.

The game, however, was drawing to its close. Some of the spectators already were departing from the grand stand. The score now was forty-six to nothing, and in the entire game the Tait School had not secured one touch-down. The end was inevitable, although the overwhelming defeat was unexpected. Even Carlton found in his heart a feeling of sympathy for his mates that was stronger than his own chagrin. He decided that he would depart before the team left the field. It would be as hard for him to witness their mortification as it would be for them to see him in the time of their defeat.

As Carlton walked slowly from the field his faithful little friend, Stone, speedily joined him.

"I don't care what anybody says," declared his little champion, "you did just the right thing, Carl. The team got itself in a hole when they put you out and made Anceps captain, and now that they are in a hole they just wanted you to come in to help them out of it. I'm glad you didn't do it."

"Are you?" inquired Carlton quietly, as he glanced down at his companion.

"Yes, I am!" repeated Stone. "There's no excuse for the fellows letting such a chap as

Digitized by Google

Anceps pull the wool over their eyes the way he did! They've got their eyes opened now all right!"

"I'm afraid it's a little late," suggested Carlton somewhat bitterly.

"Of course it's too late to do anything," admitted Stone, "but it isn't too late for them to see what they have done."

Carlton, however, was too depressed to enter into any extended conversation, and little more was said, as the two boys slowly followed the path which led toward the dormitories.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIV

ANOTHER DESERTER

THE presence of his younger companion afforded a slight relief to the gloomy boy. The enthusiasm and the unswerving devotion of Stone were elements that appealed strongly to Carlton, and again he was reminded of his own former relation to Captain Dan Richards, and smiled as he recalled how frequently his hero had stood between him and threatening trouble. It was a comfort now to know that something of this feeling was displayed by Stone. The lad showed by the expression of his face, as well as by his manner, that his confidence in the ex-captain was as strong as it ever had been.

When Stone departed, however, the feeling of gloom once more settled upon Carlton. More than ever it seemed as if all things were conspiring to defeat his best endeavors. He had not been unwilling to take his place on the team, but apparently few had given him credit for such loyalty. This feeling among the students, added to the defeat which the eleven had suffered, would tend to increase the prejudice which existed in the minds of many. Whatever he did seemed to be wrong, thought Carlton bitterly.

Digitized by Google

His heart was heavy when at last he started toward the dining-hall. Even when he entered the dining-room his feeling had not departed. Striving to conceal his depression he looked about him to see how his entrance would be received by the assembled boys.

There was a feeling of slight chagrin in Carlton's heart when he was aware that his presence had not aroused any interest in the assembly. There was a subdued air which was manifest in the lowered tones of the voices of the boys, and there was entirely lacking the enthusiasm usually manifest when the Tait School team had demonstrated its superiority over its rivals. Only a few of the boys spoke to him as he passed quietly to his place at the table.

Carlton glanced hastily at Anceps, who was seated in his accustomed place nearly opposite that which the former captain occupied. His attitude required no interpreter. No countenance in the entire room was as glum as that of Adams.

Perhaps Carlton's feeling was not altogether one of depression when he saw the condition of his rival. However, he said nothing to the captain of the eleven, and quietly took his seat. He was convinced that whatever may have been the former feelings in the heart of Anceps, they were all intensified now and united in one pronounced attitude of dejection. That Anceps cherished a feeling of hatred for him Carlton was convinced.

Digitized by Google

Striving to appear indifferent, Carlton did not join in the conversation which had not been broken by his arrival. His indifference, however, was assumed, for he was listening intently to the conversation of his companions.

In general the boys were talking about the inefficiency of the football team. Very few criticisms of individual players were expressed, but the difference in the weight between the Tait School team and that of the Military Academy was so pronounced that it provided an explanation for the overwhelming defeat which had been received.

Mingled with Carlton's assumed indifference was a feeling that was slightly contradictory. He shared with the other boys in the regret which had followed the severe defeat; he understood fully the sufferings of Anceps; and yet, in spite of both feelings, somehow he found that he was only slightly sorry for the results of the efforts of the day.

When the boys departed from the dining-room, Carlton found himself by the side of Anceps when they went down the steps of the building. The anger of the latter was pronounced, and his nerves were in such a condition after his strenuous efforts in the afternoon that he was scarcely able to control himself. Turning fiercely upon Carlton, he said sneeringly, "I never had much use for a sneak."

"I'm surprised," retorted Carlton sharply. "I thought I knew you fairly well, Anceps, and if I

Digitized by Google

did, I should have said that that was just the kind of a fellow you would appreciate most."

"I never liked a coward, either."

"There I agree with you; I'm sure you didn't."

"When a fellow is so much of a sneak that he never comes out into the open, and besides that he is such a coward that he won't take his place in the game, the whole school knows what I think of him."

"If you want to make a confession, Anceps, it seems to me that it would be better for you to avoid the crowd." As Carlton spoke, he was aware that the boys quickly were assembling about the two rivals, and were prepared for the excitement which they were confident would follow the meeting.

"I'm not confessing for myself," retorted Anceps, his voice becoming louder in his anger.

"Pardon me," said Carlton quietly. "I didn't understand you."

"You understand me all right," declared Anceps, his face now livid with rage. "You're the fellow I mean, Carl Hall."

"Yes?" said Carlton quietly as he spoke, looking directly into the eyes of his angry classmate.

"Don't stand there posing as a martyr! I know you, and so does every fellow in the Tait School."

"The fellows do seem to size up a chap pretty well here, don't they?" laughed Carlton. "I'm worrying because the boys don't understand me, and you're not worrying because they do understand you."

Digitized by Google

"I'm not a sneak! No fellow ever heard me whine, either. I don't stay out of the game because I can't run the whole team."

"Sometimes a fellow stays on the team even after it's plain that he can't run it, either."

"I never got off the team. I didn't run away because I couldn't be captain."

"I thought you were captain," suggested Carlton.

"I was," replied Anceps, "after the fellows decided that they wouldn't have a fellow who was a sneak and a coward."

There was an ominous silence which followed this remark of Anceps. The assembled boys glanced inquiringly at each of the rivals. Some of them undoubtedly were expecting further trouble. The face of Anceps was flushed, while that of Carlton was so pale as to be almost ghastly.

Suddenly the tense silence was broken by little Stone, who, appearing from the midst of the front line of spectators, seized Carlton by his coat, and in a low voice said to him: "Come on, Carl! The fellows understand. Don't touch him!"

The sneer which appeared upon the face of Anceps was even more maddening than his taunting words had been. For a moment Carlton hesitated, and then there was a cry among the boys, "Here comes Mr. Reed!"

As Carlton looked up he saw that the teacher was approaching, and then in a moment was aware

Digitized by Google

that Anceps had withdrawn from the place. If Mr. Reed had any suspicion of what was occurring he betrayed no evidence of his knowledge. Lifting his hat in response to the salutations of the boys he soon passed on. Anceps, however, also was gone, and as there was no excuse for the crowd remaining longer, the boys slowly dispersed.

Much to Carlton's dismay, Perkins insisted upon walking beside him as he started toward South Hall.

"I tell you, Carlton," said Perkins, "I don't like it!"

"I don't like it myself," assented Carlton.

"I tried to help you and you threw me down," Perkins continued.

"I did what?" demanded Carlton.

"I tried to help you into the game this afternoon. I had looked the matter over carefully and decided that the best thing for you was to be called out. Our team wasn't doing much, and it was the chance of your lifetime. If you had done what I wanted you to do you would have made yourself right with the whole school."

"I couldn't," said Carlton simply. He was not interested in what his companion was saying, as his thoughts still were upon his recent stormy interview with Anceps. That the end of the trouble had not been reached he was positive. Understanding the disposition of Anceps as he did, he was confident that his rival would not speedily forget his grudge. Fickle in many ways as Anceps undoubt-

Digitized by Google

edly was, in his personal relations he was unyielding. Engrossed in these thoughts, Carlton was only dimly aware of what Perkins was saying, and entirely oblivious of the rage which apparently his companion was displaying.

"You couldn't! You couldn't!" repeated Perkins scornfully. "That's just what you could do. I had the whole crowd with me in no time. They wanted you to go out and take the place where you belonged. They would have forgotten Anceps and everything else if you had done it. Were you afraid?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid to go into the game. Some of the fellows thought that you were afraid to go up against such a strong team. They said you were a good deal better against a weak team than against one that was stronger."

"I guess I wasn't afraid," replied Carlton with a smile, "unless it was of myself. I was entirely willing to go. I would have gone in a minute if Anceps had said the word."

"What did Anceps have to do with it? Wasn't I leading the cheering?"

"You certainly were," replied Carlton, smiling as he recalled the appearance of the awkward senior with his wildly waving arms and his stentorian tones.

"Well, what more did you want?" demanded Perkins. "I did my best and yet you didn't appre-

Digitized by Google

ciate it. You have made trouble for me, and I sha'n't get over it. Some of the boys are laughing at me now."

"What for?" inquired Carlton soberly.

"Why, for just what I said. I started the cheering and the calls for you, and got everything going, and then you simply threw me down. You sulked like that fellow Homer tells about. What was his name?"

"I guess you mean Achilles," laughed Carlton. "He sulked in his tent."

"He's the fellow I mean. Now, Carlton, I sha'n't forget it very soon. There I was doing my best for you, and then you wouldn't listen to a word, and put me in wrong before the whole school. I won't have anything more to do with you."

Turning abruptly upon his heel, before Carlton was fully aware of what had occurred, his companion departed without once glancing behind him.

Carlton, troubled though he was, and still angry over his recent interview with Anceps, was tempted to laugh as he watched the ungainly senior walking rapidly toward his dormitory. A moment later, however, he became more serious when he thought that even Perkins now had left him. Of all the school, Stone was the only one; he was still his faithful friend.

Anceps was angry because Carlton had been his rival; and perhaps the very knowledge itself that he had worked against him unjustly did not tend to

Digitized by Google

decrease the feelings in the heart of the captain of the eleven. In addition, the whole school apparently was angry at him because he had refused to go out to the help of the eleven in its time of trouble. Just what the future had in store for him Carlton was unable to foresee, but he was confident that his troubles were not at an end.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXV

AN INVITATION

THE autumn days were ended now, and a brief break in the routine of the school came with the Thanksgiving recess. Somehow in Carlton's heart this vacation meant less than any which he had taken before. Usually he had looked forward to his visit home with intense eagerness. Indeed, his custom had been to figure out the number of hours that must elapse before the day for his departure would come. As the hours departed, he then had figured even the minutes through which he must remain for the eagerly awaited time.

All was different now, however, and Carlton's feelings, as he thought of his homeward visit, were not altogether pleasurable. He would have no games now to describe to his father, who was deeply interested in all that his boy was doing. Indeed, the close relation which had existed between Carlton and his father had been the chief inspiration of his life. With him he had shared every experience and freely had talked over all the exciting events of his school career. He had not written home anything concerning the recent troubles which had come upon him, partly because of his pride

Digitized by Google

and partly from the thought of the disappointment which his father would feel in the failure of his boy to hold his position as captain of the Tait School eleven.

The visit, however, was made; but for some strange reason Carlton did not inform his father of the difficult experiences through which he was passing. His mother, with perhaps something of her keener insight, inquired several times whether or not his school life was as pleasant as it had been in the preceding years. To such questions Carlton either did not reply, or answered in such a general manner that he did not betray his real feelings, and his mother had not followed up her inquiries.

When Carlton returned to the school, a slight flurry of snow had left its traces in the corners of the fences and about the walls of some of the school buildings. The seasons had changed, and what the winter had in store every boy who had passed two or more years in the school could readily conceive. Football was at an end. In the coming days there would be hockey, skating, and coasting, and there was slight fear that the monotonous round of school duties would not be broken.

However, Carlton looked forward with less pleasure than usual to the winter sports, aware as he was that the troubles of the fall had not yet passed. It was true that most of the boys in the school would long keep in mind the exciting events of the

Digitized by Google

"He went coasting with Fletcher and Webb"

Page 231

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

football season. They might not refer definitely to these things, and yet they all had combined to produce a result which was no less real because it was somewhat indefinite. The position which Carlton had occupied formerly in the school plainly was no longer his.

Striving to strengthen his heart to meet the threatening difficulties and yet not to betray his feelings to his fellows, Carlton gave himself to his preparation for the classroom work as he had never done since enrolling in the Tait School. Indeed, as the days passed, he found a certain relief in the very ruggedness with which he held himself to his studies. Occasionally he joined the boys when they were skating upon the little lake, or pond, in the center of the school-grounds, and several times he went coasting with Fletcher and Webb, who were beginning to be more friendly than they had been when he had been driven from his position as captain of the eleven.

As a hockey player he was not an expert, and though he enjoyed the game, he never had been made a member of the school team. Consequently, his relations with the body which represented the school in the contests in the school league were not close, and he was free from some of the bitter experiences which he had confidently expected to meet.

The time between the Thanksgiving recess and the coming of the Christmas vacation passed rapidly,

Digitized by Google

and the boys were so enthusiastic over the prospect of the coming relief from the daily routine that even Perkins was ignored by his younger tormentors, and the older boys gave slight heed to the preparations for the winter contests.

One night, when Carlton entered his room after supper, he found Fletcher awaiting him. His tall and powerful friend was stretched out in an easy chair, and not only his attitude, but also the expression upon his face showed that he was more like the friend whom Carlton had known in his previous school days than like the one who had taken sides against him in the recent success of his rival.

"When do you go home?" inquired Fletcher, without rising from his chair.

"To-morrow night."

"Can't you go home with me?"

"I can, but I don't think I shall," laughed Carlton. "I don't know what would happen to my father and mother if I should be a day late."

"They seem to stand it all right when you're away during the term."

"They have to," laughed Carlton. "When they don't have to, they don't want to."

"Well, I wish you would change your plans enough to come home with me for a day, anyway. You can go right on the next morning, but I would like to have you there for a little while, anyway."

"Anything special?" inquired Carlton.

"There may be, and there may not be. You

Digitized by Google

would be a special attraction enough." Fletcher was talking in the persuasive way which had won him so many friends in the Tait School. It did Carlton's heart good to be reminded that his company was no longer avoided. Fletcher was in earnest, and his invitation was not merely cordial in its form, but sincere in its expression. Several times previously he had been invited by his classmate to visit him, but his eagerness to return to his own home usually had prevented him from accepting.

"I was thinking," continued Fletcher, "that if I got you in my house I might be able to say some things to you which are hard for me to say here."

"What things?"

"Oh, there are a good many of them." Fletcher was striving to speak lightly, but his expression, nevertheless, betrayed his deep feeling.

"Fletcher," said Carlton in a low voice, "I don't believe it's a good thing for you and me to talk over what can't be cured. Let's put it where it belongs."

"Where's that?"

"Why, out of our minds. Don't think of it. Just forget it."

"That's good of you," said Fletcher in a low voice, "but I can't let it go at that. I don't know whether I was made a fool of or whether I just showed what a fool I already was——"

"Don't finish," interrupted Carlton. "What's the use?"

Digitized by Google

"No use for you, perhaps," said Fletcher, "but I want to set myself right. I don't believe you ever understood just how Anceps was made captain and you were put out."

"I don't believe I want to know," said Carlton quickly. "That is ancient history now, and we want to see what history we can make as well as learn some of the history that has been made."

Ignoring the words of his friend, Fletcher continued, "I'm not going to tell tales, but I want you to know some things."

"Ignorance is bliss, isn't it, sometimes?" laughed Carlton.

"Not in these things. I'm not going to give Anceps away, but I just want to show you that I didn't know some things which I know now, and that was why I was drawn into the affair. It was an awful mistake. We didn't have much of a team, and the best captain in the land couldn't have pulled us through. The Military Academy was too much for us this year. They outweighed us and outplayed us. But all that has nothing to do with what I want to say to you."

"Don't say any more," broke in Carlton. "I know you well enough to understand that whatever you thought might be true, when you found out the truth you would be where you belong. I haven't had any hard feelings toward you, and I certainly haven't any now, so let's call it quits and not say anything more about it."

Digitized by Google

"But Anceps——"

"I guess I know as much about Anceps as you do," broke in Carlton. "I don't want to talk about him."

"Do you still feel hard toward him?"

"I don't know just how I do feel."

"Well, whatever your feeling is, it wouldn't keep you from playing on the same team where he is, would it?" inquired Fletcher anxiously.

"That hasn't anything to do with it at all."

"But you wouldn't play on the football team when he was on the eleven."

"It wasn't because he was on the eleven," declared Carlton warmly. "That had nothing to do with it. You know as well as I do why I wouldn't take my place when the crowd called for me in that game with the Military Academy."

"No, I don't know. I always thought it was because Anceps was on the team."

"You know better than that," said Carlton somewhat warmly. "I would have played just the same. What held me back was the report which I know he scattered that I intended to throw the game. He said that publicly, and if he had taken it back publicly I would have been glad to play. He knew why I wouldn't too."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"Anceps thinks it was because he was on the team."

Digitized by Google

"Anceps knows better than that," again said Carlton warmly.

"You haven't anything against him personally, then?" inquired Fletcher.

"Why do you ask me that question?"

"Because I want to know."

"I don't know that I can separate what he did from what he is. Can you?"

"Are you willing to make up with him?"

"If he will do the square thing, I'm perfectly willing. Did you come from him?" Carlton added after a brief silence.

"Not exactly," replied Fletcher in some confusion. "Of course I wanted to get that straightened out, but I wanted to make myself right with you."

"You're all right now," said Carlton. "I understand just how it was, and I have not held any grudge against you. I hope, though, that next year the Tait School won't have Olmsted as coach."

"Don't worry, they won't," laughed Fletcher somewhat lightly, as he arose and speedily departed from the room.

He had not been gone long, however, before Stone appeared.

"Well, what mischief have you been into now?" laughed Carlton.

"I never get into mischief," replied Stone demurely. "I've been trying to help Solomon Isaacs."

"Solomon who?"

Digitized by Google

"Solomon Isaacs."

"Who is he?"

"Why, his mamma calls him Jacob Levy. He's the new boy in my form. Some of the fellows have been picking on him, so I have been taking his part."

"I can imagine how you have been taking his part. If you had said to me you have been taking him apart, I might have believed you. Has Redhead been bothering him?"

"That's right; if anything ever happens in the school, it's always laid either upon Redhead or me."

"I wonder why?" laughed Carlton.

"I don't know," replied Stone in pretended dejection. "But I got Solomon Isaacs to brace up, anyway."

"How was that?"

"Why, he had been crying because Redhead or somebody had called him Solomon, and finally he straightened up and said that he was proud of his ancestors, and of his name too, and then he turned on Redhead and asked him if he was proud of his."

"What did Redhead say to that?"

"Nothing."

"I guess that's about all he could say."

"So the boys have stopped tormenting Solomon Jacob?"

"Solomon Isaacs," corrected Stone. "There he is now," he added abruptly, as through the window he caught sight of the little Jew passing across the campus and fled from the room.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVI

SOLOMON ISAACS

STARTLED by the unexpected departure of his visitor, Carlton quickly followed him. He could not explain to himself why he did so, but what he had heard of the courage of the little Jew had appealed to him strongly, and perhaps he was eager also to see the lad, who, by his patience and determination, had staved off the attentions of Redhead and his classmates.

When he ran out from the hallway, he saw Perkins and the small boy, who he instantly concluded must be "Solomon Isaacs." The contrast between the two was so marked that for a moment Carlton stopped and laughed as he glanced at the pair. Perkins was so tall and thin that he made the lad by his side seem even smaller than he really was.

There was no question as to the ancestry of the little companion of Perkins. Undersized, slight in his build, he nevertheless strongly presented the features of his race. He was listening intently to what his tall companion was saying, and it was manifest that Perkins was hugely enjoying the experience of having some one to look up to him in more ways than one.

Digitized by Google

Whatever mischief may have been in the mind of Stone when he ran from South Hall, he found no opportunity for exercising it, as the two boys soon passed, although the younger glanced somewhat apprehensively at his classmate. Carlton smiled as he saw the expression on the face of little Jacob, easily surmising what recollections had been aroused by the sight of one who undoubtedly had been among his tormentors.

"No good," said Stone, shaking his head as he spoke. "When two such fellows as Perkins and Solomon Isaacs get together there's nothing more to be said. Look at that," he added gleefully, as he pointed toward the two boys, who could be seen approaching the opposite side of the campus. "That's pretty nearly the long and the short of it, isn't it? Perk is about the only fellow that Solomon is chummy with, and I guess that Solomon is about as close to Perk as any one ever will be. The Tait School ought to be proud to have two such representatives," added Stone mockingly.

"The little fellow has good nerve, anyway," said Carlton thoughtfully.

"You're right, he has," assented Stone. "He's caught it more than any other fellow I ever knew, and yet he stands right up to the mark. I haven't heard him whimper once, and when he turned on us the other day and told Redhead that he was proud of his ancestors, I didn't let him know, but I felt like taking off my hat to him."

Digitized by Google

"Has Redhead left him alone since?"

"Oh, pretty much," replied Stone. "He has to stop there occasionally on his way down the stairs—you see, Solomon Isaacs' room is right below his—and make up his bed for him and help him comb his hair, and two or three times he's shown him how a white man's face ought to be washed."

"Is that all he does?" laughed Carlton.

"That's all he does now."

"I suppose you mean that he used to do more?"

"More? More? Well, I think he did! You would have thought so too if you had seen him."

"You little imps will be getting into trouble with Mr. Crane if you don't look out," warned Carlton.

"We haven't done anything bad. We just wanted to teach Solomon Isaacs a few lessons that no one else would give him. He's learned them already, and I don't think he will have any more trouble if he should stay in the Tait School ten years."

"I guess from the appearance of him he won't stay that long," suggested Carlton. "It's all well enough for these young boys to try to make fun of some of the little fellows who belong to another race, but if they don't look out they will find the young Jews getting into all the good places. That's what my father says. He says the trouble with most American boys is they don't know how to work, and they won't try to learn. He says the Jewish boys are hard workers, shrewd, and keen-witted, and are working twenty-four hours in the day. The

Digitized by Google

first thing you know they will have all the good places."

"I'm not worrying about that," retorted Stone. "My uncle has promised to get me a position with the Trust Company when I get through school and college."

"Your uncle will get you a place in which you can start," said Carlton seriously; "but my uncle said to me that his bank in the last three years had taken on twenty-two American boys just out of college; of course it had taken them on at different times, but he said not one of them had made good."

"What was the trouble?" inquired Stone, stopping and looking in amazement at his companion.

"All I know about it is what my uncle said."

"What was that?"

"He said these fellows didn't know how to work, and his firm didn't have time to teach them. Oh, of course, a good many of these fellows will come out all right; but it would be much easier, and they would do so much better, if they would learn when they had their chance."

"Whew!" whistled Stone. "You're getting so you can talk like my father. He makes remarks to me like that every time I go home."

"Probably he has some good reason for it," replied Carlton with a smile.

Carlton turned and left his young companion and walked thoughtfully to his room in South Hall. The words he had just been speaking were those to

Digitized by Google

which he had listened not long ago in his own home. Now that he had quoted them, they seemed to have a new and deeper meaning.

In a vague way he realized that many of the boys in the Tait School, who came from well-to-do homes and were supplied with most of the things they desired, were not learning how to work as they might and ought to learn. Many of these boys were exceptionally bright, and the majority of them prided themselves upon coming from "good homes." But were they learning the first of all the lessons to be learned in such a school? He recalled his own experiences and thought how many times he had believed that he was gaining an advantage over his teachers when he had successfully evaded some task or had lost sight of some opportunity. The motto of most of the boys seemed to be not "how much," but "how little."

Since his own troubles had come upon him, Carlton had been studying much harder than ever before in his school career. Now that the weeks had passed, the results were becoming manifest. It was easier for him now to study, and there was a deeper satisfaction in the knowledge that he was more nearly doing the work for which he had been entered in the Tait School.

There was a certain glow also that came to his heart whenever he thought of his steady rise in his standing in the classroom. He was now recognized as one in the first half dozen in the entire class of

Digitized by Google

sixty-three. The last report which had been sent home had marked the climax of his efforts, and the satisfaction and pride of his father and mother in his advancement had been as pleasing to him as it was to them.

And yet Carlton Hall was not happy. Light-hearted, popular throughout most of his school career, he felt now as if some heavy clouds were resting upon him. The school had turned from him and the place which he once had held now belonged to Anceps.

In all sincerity Carlton said to himself that although Adams was the captain of the team, the influence which he exerted among the boys was not nearly so strong as that which he himself had had only a short time before. And yet it had been sufficient to deprive him of his position and to permit Anceps to occupy it. What could be said now about his influence over the younger boys when such a result had been brought to pass, while Anceps was holding the position with Carlton as an outsider? He was like no other boy in the school. A strong feeling of resentment and a feeling that he had been unjustly treated by his schoolmates rose in his heart as he climbed the stairway to his room. It had been no fault of his that the troubles had swept over him. He could not justly be blamed for the fact that the team was exceptionally weak. He ought rather to be praised for the work he had done than blamed for the weakness of the eleven. And

Digitized by Google

yet Olmsted, the coach, was not to return the following year. He too had done his best with the material at hand, and his services would be no longer required because he had failed to produce results that were impossible at the beginning. And Carlton simply had shared in the experience.

Carlton Hall, usually light-hearted and care-free, was strangely depressed when he reentered the room. Indeed, the boy felt that somehow he was being unjustly treated, and that troubles which he did not merit were being visited upon him. And then the recollection of what Stone had said concerning the courage of little Solomon Isaacs came back to him. If the little Jew had the tenacity of purpose to hold his own and stand courageously by the position for which the boys were taunting him, why could not he, Carlton Hall, former captain of the football team, one of the best football players in the Tait School, and one who had been the leader among his fellows, also be able to show something of the same character?

Courage returned with the thought, and arousing himself Carlton prepared for the work which must begin with the study hour only half an hour away. As he reached for his books, Fletcher and Webb once more entered the room.

"We've come over to talk to you, Carl," said Fletcher, as he flung his cap across the room and seated himself in the easiest of the easy chairs.

"That's very kind of you," laughed Carlton.

Digitized by Google

"You know the meeting of the school league occurs next week, don't you?"

"Yes," replied Carlton sharply.

He had thought many times of the coming meeting, and wondered who the delegates from the Tait School would be. The rule had been that the captain of each team and one of the teachers from each school should be delegates to this convention, which had control of the affairs of the league. As captain of the football team, naturally he was a representative of his school. But he had been deposed from that position, and whether or not the fact that he previously had met with the other delegates in the meetings of the advisory body would entitle him to represent the Tait School now, was a question over which he had thought much.

"They meet here," continued Fletcher.

"Yes, I know they do," assented Carlton.

"You were a delegate last October, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you must be now."

"But I'm not in a position to go as delegate for the Tait School any longer," answered Carlton quietly. "It was different when I was captain."

"I don't see it," said Fletcher. "The football team has finished its season, and you were the delegate in October. You'll have to go next week."

Once more Carlton thought of the courage of little Solomon Isaacs, and smiling slightly he shook his head at his two visitors, though he did not speak.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION

CARLTON'S two visitors departed in a brief time. The topic on which evidently they had come to consult him had not been touched upon in the further conversation, and when Fletcher and Webb were gone Carlton was not clear in his mind as to what course they would follow.

As for himself, he had arrived at the conclusion that he would not make any efforts to redeem his position as a delegate for the Tait School, and that it would be manifestly unfair for him to go in such a capacity even if Fletcher and Webb, in their zeal, should make such action possible.

The following day no reference was made to the conversation by any of the three boys. Perhaps Carlton, in his heart, was slightly disappointed over this, although his decision not to be a delegate at the meeting of the league was as strong as when it had first been formed.

Days passed, and still the topic was not referred to by either of his friends, and when at last the time for the meeting of the athletic association was approaching, Carlton still was not informed as to any action which Fletcher might take.

Digitized by Google

Carlton had decided to attend the preliminary meeting of the school. He had not arrived at this conclusion without long thought. He was aware that his presence might be misunderstood and different motives from those which had moved him be given for his presence.

The thought of Solomon Isaacs again stirred the troubled boy, and he decided that it would be weak for him to stay away for any such implied cause. He still was a member of the senior class and a student in the Tait School. Fletcher and Webb were now almost his sole friends, with the exception of little Stone. The sentiment of the school was as changeable as the weather. He had no right, Carlton decided, to be unduly elated when it favored him, and he ought to be strong enough not to be unduly cast down when the change came. Indeed, the young senior was aware that there were certain elements of strength in his character which were not present at the beginning of the school year. He had been taught some new lessons. His experiences had been vastly different from those of the preceding year when all things were favoring. It would not do for him now to flinch when the first real test had come.

At the appointed hour Carlton quietly proceeded to the room in the rear of the chapel where the meeting of the Athletic Association of the Tait School was to be held. Carr was the president of the organization, and every boy in the school who

Digitized by Google

had contributed toward the support of any of the teams was duly recognized as a member.

Carlton discovered when he entered the room that only a few boys were present. The sight at first caused him to hesitate, but when he heard the tramping of many feet up the stairway, he quickly entered the room and quietly took his seat in the chair which he had occupied at such meetings during the past two years.

It was not long before the room was filled, and the meeting was called to order by Carr. After various matters pertaining to the athletic life of the school had been disposed of, Webb rose to speak concerning the delegates who were to represent the Tait School at the approaching meeting of the league.

"We have these delegates already appointed," he said, "but I suspect there may be some confusion concerning the one who is to represent us in football. In order to make all matters plain, I move that the same delegate be authorized to represent us who was our representative in the October meeting."

"Second the motion," called Stone loudly from his seat in the rear of the room.

"The motion is made and seconded," called the chairman, "and is now before you. Are you ready for the vote?"

"Mr. Chairman!"

Carlton turned quickly about in his seat as he recognized the shrill tones of Perkins.

Digitized by Google

"Mr. Chairman!" repeated Perkins, ignoring the titter which ran along the rows in the rear of the room where the younger boys were seated. "Mr. Chairman, I object. We have a clearly defined by-law which states just who shall represent the Tait School at such meetings. It doesn't make any difference who represented us last October, for this is the February meeting. At this meeting the by-laws says who shall be our four delegates. They are the captains of the football team, the baseball eleven——"

A shout interrupted the eloquence of the speaker as Redhead called out, "He means the four hundred! He doesn't know how many men play on a nine!"

Carr rapped sharply for order, and the noisy members of the lowest form subsided.

"Of course everybody knows I mean the football nine," resumed Perkins, whereat there was a renewed laugh from the irreverent small boys.

"Go on! Go on! More! More!" were called from different parts of the room.

Encouraged by these words, Perkins continued: "As I was saying, we already know who is the captain of the football team, and the captain of every other team in the school. They are the ones to represent us. We have no right to put any one in their places. Therefore I rise to a point of order. This motion is out of order, and I shall ask the chair so to rule."

Digitized by Google

"Sit down! Sit down!" came loudly from the rear of the room.

"I shall not sit down," retorted Perkins, as he faced his accusers. "I shall not sit down!" he shouted. "I claim my rights as an American citizen. My voice shall be heard."

"No doubt about that," said Webb, as he yanked the speaker's coat and pulled him back into his seat.

Instantly rising again, Perkins said, "Mr. Chairman——"

"The point is not well taken," interrupted Webb. "As far as the office of captain is concerned, the one who held it for the longest time is the one who is entitled to represent the school. We know who did most of the work. Every fellow realizes that he is entitled to this honor. The fact that some one else got into the place just at the close of the season does not entitle him to represent——"

"Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!" shouted Perkins, interrupting the eloquence of Webb. "I should like to know if the point I raised is debatable."

"It is not," replied the chairman.

"Then I should like to know what the honorable gentleman on my left means by trying to deliver such Ciceronian eloquence as he has just now been guilty of. I don't understand what he means."

"Mr. Chairman," again broke in Webb, who had not resumed his seat during the remarks of Perkins. "If my learned and eloquent friend will elongate his

Digitized by Google

ears and turn their full length in my direction, he will not only hear, but possibly may be able to understand what I am saying."

A shout of laughter arose from the entire assembly, but unabashed by what had been said, Perkins, pointing his long finger at the speaker, shouted, "I demand a ruling!"

"The chair rules that the point was not well made. It is a fair question who ought to represent the school eleven. Some plainly think it is the one who has served longest as captain, while others are of the opinion that it ought to be——"

"I appeal," broke in Perkins. "I appeal to the association from the ruling of the chairman."

"Very well," replied the presiding officer. "I shall put the motion to the body. As many as favor the ruling of the chair will say aye."

A roar of ayes followed the appeal, and when there was a call for those who were opposed, Perkins alone voted.

There were derisive calls from the smaller boys in the rear of the room, but Perkins still plainly was unabashed by the attitude of his audience.

"Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman!" he broke in once more. "The speaker who described his eloquence as resembling the musical tones that come from a certain long-eared animal——" Before Perkins could complete the sentence there was another burst of laughter from the assembled boys, and he was for a time unable to proceed.

Digitized by Google

At this point Carlton arose and at once was recognized by the presiding officer.

"Mr. President," he said slowly, "I appreciate very much the feeling of those who indirectly have voted for me. I do not want to take too much upon myself, but I assume that the point at issue is whether I shall attend the convention or the present captain of the eleven shall represent the school. Let me say to you and all the members of the association," he added, as he turned and faced the audience for a moment, "that there is no question here at all. The by-laws specifically state that the captain of the eleven shall be a delegate from the Tait School. I am not the captain, and so how can I be a delegate? The fact that I have been the captain has nothing to do with the case. You wouldn't let the fellow who had been captain a year ago serve as delegate, would you? Captain Dan Richards is one of the best fellows that ever graduated from this school, but you wouldn't allow him to be a delegate now. It seems to me the matter is perfectly plain, and that there is nothing for us to do except to abide by the by-laws which we have adopted, and these plainly state that the captains are to be the delegates. Of course this must refer to those who are captains at the time when the convention is held. That being the case, I trust there will be no further efforts to modify or change in any way the rules as they now stand."

Before Carlton had finished, Perkins once more

Digitized by Google

was on his feet. "That's exactly the point I am making, Mr. Chairman!" he shouted abruptly. "I have tried to make myself plain."

"You have succeeded. You have succeeded," broke in Redhead. "You're the plainest fellow in the Tait School."

The chairman rapped for order, which, after a brief uproar, was restored.

"The last speaker is exactly right," continued Perkins.

"Of course he is," broke in Redhead. "What you said about your being the plainest——"

The eloquence of the noisy lad, however, was speedily quenched, and Redhead was pulled back forcibly toward his chair.

"I have no personal feelings in this matter," continued Perkins, who had not moved from his position during the confusion. "I am pleading for a cause that is larger than any man. When the years shall have passed and the ceaseless ages have been rolling on, what a magnificent thought it will be that in the annals of this great school one can read, though he lives one thousand years after the events occurred, of the great action of the student body in refusing to be led away from the just position which had been taken."

Tremendous applause burst forth as the grandiloquent words of the speaker were heard. Evidently unaware of the purpose of his noisy hearers, Perkins, sweeping his long arms all about him, began

Digitized by Google

again: "The greatest thing in the world is the mind of a man, and the greatest factor in the mentality of a man is education. The ability to listen to reason, and to heed the words of those who have been inundated in the deeper waters of the stream of wisdom is a trait which is not only to be commended, but also is to be approved, even applauded; yea, even pursued. It will be a great day for this great old school when it can be said of every assembly, as no doubt it will be said of this, that they were led by the light of reason, and were not slow to follow admissions of wise counselors."

Renewed applause broke out in the assembly, and as the boys were laughing loudly, the chairman made one more effort to restore order.

"I have only one word more to say," said Carlton, who had risen again, as there seemed to be a lull in the eloquence of Perkins.

"Mr. Chairman!" broke in Perkins once more. "Have I got the floor?"

His long index-finger was pointed at the presiding officer as a man might have aimed a pistol. Even that officer was unable entirely to retain his dignity and, striving to smother the laugh which arose, he said, "Of course, the speaker will yield the floor to——"

"I will yield nothing!" shouted Perkins. "I have stirred this audience most mightily. They have come to see that what I have said is true and altogether to be desired——"

Digitized by Google

" ' I am not willing to serve as a delegate ' "

Page 255

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"Sit down! Sit down!" were calls that came now from Redhead and Stone and various others of the younger members of the association.

Abashed for a moment, Perkins seated himself, thereby providing an opportunity which Carlton was quick to seize.

"I simply want to say that I am not willing to serve as a delegate, as I do not hold an office, which is a necessary condition. You have men who are captains, and they are the ones to represent you. As far as I am concerned, I shall not be willing to go, no matter how the association may vote. It seems to me this matter is already settled, and our talk about it is all wasted."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE DIVISION

WHEN Carlton resumed his seat there was a general expression of dissent from the statement he had made. It was not pronounced, however, and in a brief time was forgotten when there came from various parts of the assembly repeated calls that he again be made a captain. Who started this demand, apparently no one knew, but it was made by one or two, and then taken up by many of the boys, until there was a call which was loud and general.

In the midst of the confusion Carlton again arose, and, lifting his hand to express his desire for silence, said: "It's good of you fellows to say that you want me again, but every one of you can understand how that is impossible. In the first place the football season is ended, and there is no more use for a captain this year."

"The captain will serve as a delegate, won't he?" called some one in the rear of the room, and when Carlton looked in the direction from which the query had come, he was convinced that little Stone had asked the question, although apparently the little fellow was gazing interestedly out of the window.

Digitized by Google

"That's right! That's right!" came from various parts of the room.

"All that is not the duty of the captain, but the work of a delegate from the Tait School. The captain is the delegate, of course, but it doesn't follow that the delegate ought to be the captain. No, Mr. Chairman," Carlton continued, once more addressing the presiding officer, "I should never be willing to accept an appointment to represent this school in any such way. The team saw fit to put another fellow into my place as captain. Of course they had a perfect right to do that, and I am not saying one word against what they did. All I claim for myself is that when they put me out of that office, they put me out of the office of a delegate too. I am thankful to the fellows for their good-will in talking about making me a delegate, but I could not serve because I'm no longer captain, and I should not be willing to be made captain after the schedule of the team was completed."

"Why didn't you play in the academy game?" called some one sharply.

"What's that?" demanded Carlton, turning abruptly about in his place, his face flushing and an unusual brightness appearing in his eyes as he spoke. The question was not repeated, however, and after hesitating a moment Carlton looked to the presiding officer and said, "Mr. Chairman, will it be proper for me to reply to that question from the floor?"

"I think it will," answered the chairman. "On a

Digitized by Google

basis of a question of privilege, I'm sure all the members of the association will be glad to have you answer that question if you are willing to do so."

Carlton hesitated a moment, and then said quietly, his voice trembling slightly as he spoke: "I think every fellow in this room already knows just why I didn't play. It wasn't because I didn't want to, for I was willing, not only to take my place as half-back, but also to do my best to uphold the name and honor of the Tait School. All I wanted was just one thing, and then I would have dropped everything else and would have done my level best on the gridiron. I waited for that one thing, and it didn't come."

The senior ceased, and for a moment there was a tense silence in the assembly. The eyes of every boy were fixed upon him; even Anceps, looking up, gazed steadily at his rival.

"Tell us what the one thing was," called some one.

"If you don't know," retorted Carlton sharply, "I don't think I shall explain it to you. I don't think there are many fellows in the school who will give me credit for being 'grouchy,' or trying to force myself into a place where I am not wanted. If that was all there was in it, I should not be here to-day, and I certainly should not be trying to explain to the school my reason for doing what I did. I think you know me well enough to know that what I have told you about the affair is the truth. If you are not willing to trust me for that, I don't be-

Digitized by Google

lieve that anything more I could say would make you change your minds."

Carlton was aware that many of the boys in the room now were looking steadily at Anceps, as if they were expecting him to add something to that which his rival had said. The captain, however, gazing steadily at the floor, did not once lift his eyes, so that he either was unaware of the eager glances of his comrades or preferred to ignore them. Even Carlton seemed to think that Anceps would answer the unspoken appeal, but as the silence continued, as he had not taken his seat, he once more faced the presiding officer and said: "Now, Mr. Chairman, in order that everything may be done fairly, and that no one ever can say that I stayed to try to force through anything which might affect me, I am going to leave before any vote can be taken."

Carlton spoke hurriedly because he was aware that his friend Fletcher was standing and trying to attract the attention of the president of the association. Carlton surmised what his friend might say, and having no desire to be present at such a time, he had expressed himself in a manner that would leave no doubt in the minds of the school what his preference in this matter was. Without looking in either direction, Carlton quickly took his cap and walked down the aisle.

He was aware when he drew near the door that there was confusion in the room, and that there

Digitized by Google

were not a few protests against his departure. Much of his former feeling of mortification now was gone. There was a spirit of determination that had apparently overcome all his other feelings. Indeed, there was a certain glow in his heart, due perhaps to the stand which he had taken, and partly due also to the natural responses to the demands of his fellows.

Carlton Hall was not unlike other boys, and when as he thought it had been necessary for him to take his stand, although he knew he must stand alone if he did so, he had suffered from the misunderstanding of his friends. How intensely he had suffered no one would ever know. Mortified, chagrined, hurt, he had fought his battle alone. Now that he was, in a measure, released from the necessity of a large part of the experiences through which he had been passing since Anceps had replaced him as the captain of the football eleven, the reaction had come.

Quietly ignoring the calls and the confusion, Carlton withdrew from the assembly and returned to his room in South Hall.

His feeling of curiosity was strong, and, although it was not difficult for him to restrain his desires, nevertheless he was eagerly looking toward the room in the rear of the chapel where the athletic association was still in session. Somehow he believed that he would soon receive word concerning the action which might be taken. And he was eager

Digitized by Google

to know. Convinced that he had decided wisely, nevertheless the eager-hearted boy was not without some hope that his decision might be overruled by the assembly, and that somehow he might again be placed in a position in which he would be recognized as one of the leaders. And Carlton was positive that such a position, if it should come by merit, was rightly his.

Carlton's expectations were realized about a half-hour afterward when his faithful little friend, Stone, ran swiftly up the stairway, and, without knocking, opened the door and entered his room.

"You're a quitter!" declared the little fellow sharply as he seated himself in the best of the easy chairs.

"I'm a what?" demanded Carlton, wheeling about and facing his accuser.

"You're a quitter. The fellows, every one of them, were all ready to stand by you."

"Not all of them," suggested Carlton.

"A good many of them were. Enough to pass a vote, anyway," declared little Stone. "You spoiled the whole game when you got up and left. You didn't have any right to do that. Some of the fellows say you weren't thinking about any one but yourself, and there were Fletcher and Webb, Redhead and I, and a lot of other fellows——"

Carlton smiled slightly as he heard his valiant champion placing himself and his mischievous little friend in the same class with the seniors.

Digitized by Google

"All willing to do our best to pull you through; but when you pulled out, we couldn't pull you through, could we?"

"What were you trying to do? What was your plan?" inquired Carlton quietly, though his face betrayed his deep interest in his visitor's reply to his question.

"Not very much," laughed Stone. "All we wanted to do was to put Anceps out and put you in."

"There was no use in that," said Carlton, shaking his head. "The season is ended, and there's nothing more to be done."

"You fixed it so there isn't, I'm afraid," said Stone disgustedly. "I don't see what we are going to do for a chap if the fellow himself won't let us do anything for him."

"Did you take a vote?" inquired Carlton with interest.

"We took lots of them. You know what I mean."

"You didn't take a vote on the matter of the delegate, did you?"

"Not exactly."

"What do you mean by 'not exactly'? You either took a vote or you did not."

"We did a lot of talking, anyway. Perkins made three or four more speeches. I guess he thought D. Webster wasn't in his class," laughed the little fellow mischievously.

Digitized by Google

"I guess he wasn't," suggested Carlton dryly.

"You can't make Perk believe that. He swung his arms and yelled and thrashed up and down the aisle! I haven't had so much fun in a month—not since he ate that ipecac pie. You just ought to have seen him. The fellows laughed and cheered him, and he thought they were all dead in earnest. He swelled out like a pouter-pigeon, threw back his shoulders and arms, and kept right on speaking until finally Fletcher got a chance to put in a word."

"What did Fletch say?"

"Why, he said he felt the way a good many fellows in the school did, and that was that it was a big mistake which the eleven had made, and he said he was as much to blame as any one, because he didn't vote against it at the time. He said he had not thought how it would hurt, but now he saw how you felt about it, and what a mistake the school had made——"

"Was Anceps there all the time?"

"You're right he was, and he was listening with the whole length of his ears too."

"Did he speak?"

"No, sir, he didn't! Who was that old fellow who Mr. Crane said could be silent in seven languages?"

"I guess you mean one Von Moltke."

"That's right. That's the chap's name. Well, that's what Anceps was trying to do. I think all of us know how he was suffering, because there's

Digitized by Google

nothing in the world quite so hard for him to do as to keep still when it's possible for him to talk. I think we could have carried it through, Carl, and you made a mistake to leave us."

"I don't think I made any mistake, though of course I appreciate the good-will of the fellows. I'm glad it didn't come to a vote."

In the days that followed, Carlton soon discovered that, although the sentiment in the school had changed, there still was a large contingent devoted to Anceps and rendering him a willing following.

Somehow, although Carlton never was able to explain just how the line came to be drawn, the school soon was in two divisions, and it was found that Anceps was the natural leader of one, while Carlton himself was the leader of the other.

Instead of dying away, the breach increased, but did not reach its climax until spring had come.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIX

AN EFFORT AT RECONCILIATIOI

CARLTON was aware now that he had a bitter enemy. However fickle Anceps might be in other matters, his feeling toward his rival became more intense and increased with the passing days.

The experience was so entirely new to Carlton that for a time he merely endeavored to ignore his rival, but as the days passed he became more thoroughly convinced that the friendship of the former days was gone, and that there was no prospect of its return.

After he had thought the matter over carefully he sought out Anceps in his room. His experience had not been merely disappointing, but to the warm-hearted boy the thought that there was some one who intensely disliked him was galling. Much as he had suffered in the mortification which had followed the loss of his position and in the success of his rival in obtaining the place, Carlton was suffering still more in the thought of the trouble in the school, and the active enmity of Anceps.

The feeling in the school had been showing itself in many ways, although, as has been stated, the student-body was divided into two different parts,

Digitized by Google

one favoring Carlton and the other following Anceps.

Carlton assured himself that he was not actuated by any of the motives which had done so much to create unhappiness in his closing year at the Tait School, but that he was moved by a sincere desire to renew the friendship which had existed between himself and Anceps all through their course up to the time of the trouble in the football eleven.

"Sit down," said Anceps brusquely, as he discovered who his visitor was. The shining teeth were no longer to be seen and a deep scowl rested upon his face, and the expression in his eyes was such that Carlton was convinced before he began to speak that his attempt to restore the former relations would be vain.

"Anceps," he said quietly, "what's the use of all this?"

"No use at all," said Anceps glumly.

"Then why not forget it all and start in where we were before?"

"They call me Anceps," replied Adams, "but that doesn't mean that I can forget the injury which you have done to me."

"'Injury!' 'Injury!'" demanded Carlton sharply. "What 'injury' have I done you?"

"Look here, Carlton!" said Anceps, his face flushing as he spoke. "You played the baby act. You aren't the only fellow in the world who's been disappointed about holding office. I did nothing

Digitized by Google

at all against you, but the team was going to pieces, and something had to be done. I didn't want the position, but Olmsted and Fletcher and Webb, and some of the other fellows, thought I ought to take it. Now," he added somewhat bitterly, "Fletch and Webb are posing as fellows who have been imposed upon! They are good little boys! They didn't want to put you out. They were duped by Anceps the Terrible!"

As the excited boy stopped a moment, Carlton looked quietly at him, striving to repress the feeling of anger which rapidly was rising in his own heart. He had regretted that he had come, although he knew that he had been moved by the best of motives in coming.

"Go on with your story," he said, after Anceps had been silent for a few moments.

"There isn't any more to say. The coach and the fellows wanted me to take your place as captain of the team. I didn't want to do it, as I told you, but for the sake of the school I was willing to do what I could. Oh, I know you don't believe that," he added sharply, as a slight smile appeared upon Carlton's face. "You accuse me of working underhandedly to get you out and put myself in, but you never were more mistaken in your life——"

"Look here, Anceps," broke in Carlton. "Just drop all that. It doesn't add anything, and let's come straight to the point. Your explanation and mine may not be the same, but I am telling you

Digitized by Google

honestly, let bygones be bygones. I'll never refer to these things again if you won't, and we'll just call it all square; and if we can't be as good friends as we used to be, at least we can stop making fools of ourselves in being enemies when it's hurting the school the way this performance now is going on."

"It's all very well for you to forget and talk about letting bygones be bygones. You haven't any idea what I have gone through! I have put up with more than I ever have had to in my life, or than I ever shall again," Anceps said in a bitter voice. "There isn't any use in talking about this thing, Carl. What is done is done, and 'what can't be cured must be endured.' I never shall forgive you for what you have done to me."

"But," protested Carlton, "I don't know what it is that I have done to you. It seems to me that if I wanted to whine I'm the one who might have something to say. I was the captain of the team and you got my place. If it was to help the team, then all I can say is, the team didn't seem to be helped very much by the change——"

"There you have it," broke in Anceps. "That's just it! After you couldn't be captain of the team you wouldn't play at all. You were like the little kid who, if he couldn't have his own way in everything, wouldn't play."

"Look here, Anceps," said Carlton quietly. "You know better than that. You know just exactly the reason why I didn't play. I wanted to.

Digitized by Google

I was willing too, when the crowd called to me, to go out on the gridiron and do my level best. But, put yourself in my place. The team was sure to be beaten. The captain of the eleven had said that if the Tait School lost it would be because I intended to throw the game. Would you play under such circumstances?"

Carlton looked directly into the face of his classmate, and though he spoke frankly, the tones of his voice were not unfriendly.

"I guess," said Anceps, "if you ran around listening to every telltale in the school you'd have enough to keep you busy the rest of your life."

"I didn't need any telltale."

"Some one must have said that to you."

"Some one did say it to me, but I myself heard you when you said it to the fellows on the steps of the post-office. Of course, afterward the report went through the school; but I didn't need to listen to anything of that kind because I had heard it first hand. If you had been willing to take it back as publicly as you had said it, the trouble would all have been over. But I'm talking straight to you, Anceps. I'm willing to forget all these things and let bygones be bygones. What do you say?"

As he spoke Carlton extended his hand, and the genuineness of his desire to restore the friendship of the former days was manifest both in his attitude and in the expression with which he looked at his classmate.

Digitized by Google

"I will have nothing to do with a fellow who threw me down as you have done. We needed your help in the game, and you showed you were a rank quitter. I didn't care so much for myself, but I do care for the good name of the eleven and of the school, and you have simply shown what you are. The less you and I have to say to each other the better it will be for ourselves and for the school." Anceps was speaking in a low voice, but his anger was too manifest to be ignored.

"Is that your last word, Anceps?" inquired Carlton in a low voice.

"The very last. I hope I shall never have to speak to you again. I don't want anything to do with a fellow who has played the part you have."

"I'm not here to defend myself, Anceps. You know that what I have told you is true. If you don't want to follow up the suggestion I made, then I have nothing more to say."

Carlton waited a moment as if he still was hopeful that his classmate would withdraw the statement he had made; but soon aware that Anceps was unchangeable, Carlton quickly took his cap and departed from the room.

His experiences he kept to himself, not even referring to them before Fletcher or Webb. His own uneasiness, however, was in a measure relieved because of the effort he had made to meet Anceps on common ground. His attempt had been met with not merely refusal, but also with contempt, and

Digitized by Google

Carlton was convinced that all further efforts on his part would be vain.

Carlton was unaware of one of the rules in the game of life. No man is so thoroughly hated as one who has been injured by another. Next to this is the truth that when one man feels under heavy obligations to another his love for his benefactor sometimes becomes a burden instead of a joy. At all events, in the case of the two young seniors in the Tait School, the intense hatred of Anceps was due more to the failure of his own attempts to injure Carlton than to anything which his classmate had done or had left undone.

During the days that followed, Carlton was subjected to a series of petty annoyances, such as he had not experienced since his first year in the Tait School. Most of the boys in the lower form had remained his unswerving friends. However, there was a contingent among the companions of Stone and Redhead who were equally loyal in their attentions to Anceps, and many a time they endeavored to show their loyalty to him by the pranks which they played upon Carlton.

Pails of water were poured from windows when he was passing underneath them, several times he found his room "stacked," he tripped over unseen wires stretched in front of his door, his books were "lost," and in many small ways he was the object of a series of annoyances that brought expressions of sympathy even from Perkins.

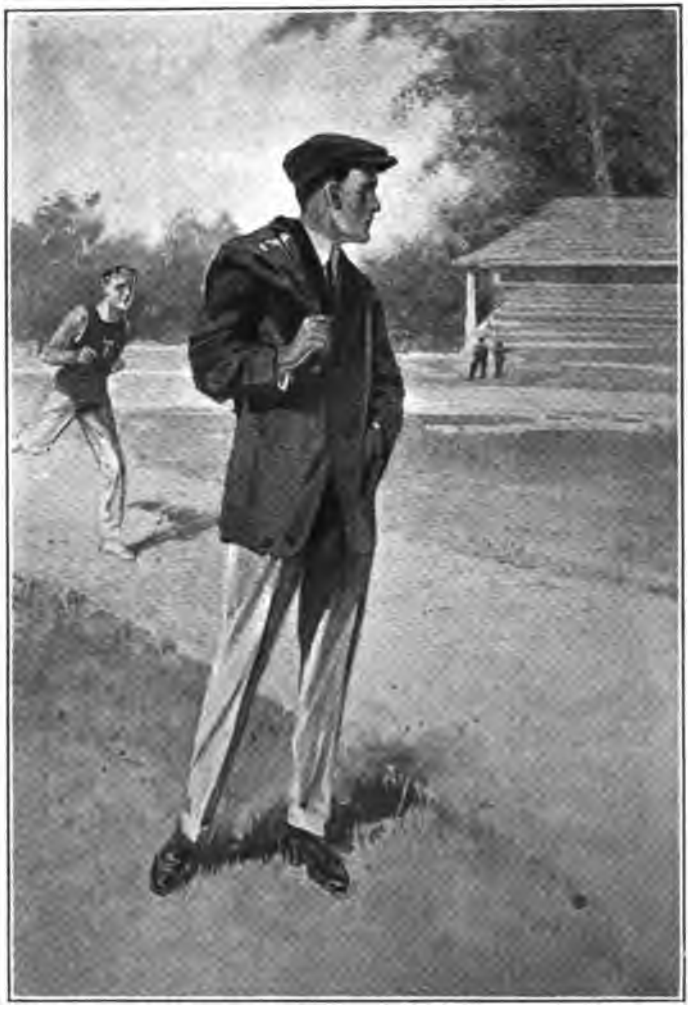
Digitized by Google

Carlton was convinced that all these petty pranks were played upon him by some of the younger followers of Anceps. He found words of warning left upon his desk, some of them written in a form which made him laugh heartily as he read them. Pirates and "death's-heads" adorned the notes which were written. And there were threats that if he didn't "cease persecuting" the best fellow in the school his days were numbered.

The first impulse in Carlton's mind had been to catch two or three of these younger boys and then spank them soundly, and tell them that he wanted no further exhibitions of their attention. The feeling, however, which was daily becoming stronger in the school among the older boys, and the increasing demonstrations of the loyalty of those who were followers of either of the leaders caused him to abandon the project and he devoted himself more completely to his school work. He was doing his utmost to avoid contact with his enemies.

There were times, however, when the spring days were at their height and the athletic teams were busy, when it was impossible for him to avoid them. There had been no reason why Carlton should not play on the school nine, because Webb was the captain of the team, and Anceps played in left field. The latter had nothing to do with the management of the nine, and as he was an excellent player, there were few opportunities offered for criticism or conversation.

Digitized by Google



"He was doing his utmost to avoid contact with his enemies"

Page 272

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Meanwhile Carlton, Fletcher, and Webb had become almost inseparable. As the school-year drew near to its close it seemed to every one of the three boys that there was so much time which had been lost that they must take advantage of all that remained. Consequently they were nearly always together, and their friendship became deeper with every passing day.

The strangest part of Carlton's experiences had been with Perkins, who, after having been a violent partisan of his and later the follower of Anceps, suddenly became equally vociferous in his declaration of loyalty to Carlton. The latter smiled as he heard the reports which Stone brought him that Perk had declared that Anceps had not treated him right, and that he was done with him forever. Upon Carlton's declaration that he did not desire his aid, Perkins quietly assured him that he didn't know what he was talking about. In spite of the "hint," Perkins, who had been the noisiest orator in the camp of Anceps, now let his voice be heard in the camp of the enemy.

The climax came, however, one day when Carlton, hearing a wild cry on the street, rushed to the window to behold his eloquent champion in such a plight that, after staring blankly at him for a moment, he laughed loudly and, seizing his cap, started quickly from his room.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXX

CONCLUSION

FROM the sight which greeted his eyes, it seemed at first to Carlton that Stone and Redhead had secured all the younger boys in the school, and that as a body they were in swift pursuit of the fleeing Perkins. His long legs and arms, his head leaning far forward, his long hair unprotected by a covering of any kind, presented a weird appearance. His tormentors were shouting and laughing in their delight, and even the utmost efforts of the awkward senior were required to evade his pursuers.

Just what the scene implied Carlton at once understood. Some of his little champions, unconvinced by the latest turn in the devotion of the would-be successor of D. Webster, had suddenly formed in a body and charged upon their enemy. Whatever efforts Perkins might have made to protect or defend himself were vain in the face of such odds.

"Grab his foot!" "Pull his hair!" "Trip him up!" "Stop him!" "Speech!" "Speech!" were among the cries that greeted the ears of Perkins in his mad flight.

Digitized by Google

The sight of Carlton evidently suggested a way of escape to the sadly beset boy. As soon as he discovered that Carlton was near, he changed the direction of his flight and ran swiftly toward the place where Carlton was standing.

"Keep these little imps off!" begged Perkins as he drew near his classmate.

His plea, however, availed little, because his tormentors were upon him in a moment. One was pulling his coat as he fell forward, another deprived him of one shoe, and in spite of his exclamations of anger, doubtless he would have fared badly if Carlton had not been moved by a feeling of compassion for the awkward boy, and sharply ordered Stone and Redhead to call off their minions.

The interval secured by Carlton's demand enabled Perkins suddenly to break away from the younger boys; and if any sprinter in the Tait School ever made faster time than the ungainly senior in his flight to his room, the record has not been published.

Turning to the younger boys, Carlton said sharply to them: "Redhead, I want you and Stone to see that nothing more happens to Perk; for a while, anyway. You understand, don't you?"

"Yes, we understand," laughed Stone. With shouts of glee the boys turned away as Carlton, moved by a sudden impulse, started toward the dormitory in which Perkins roomed.

He had been moved strongly by the expression in his classmate's face. Inclined as he had been to

Digitized by Google

laugh at the frantic efforts of the awkward boy to shake off his tormentors, what he had seen in his face a little later had suddenly aroused a feeling of compassion, which caused him quickly to change his plans and walk rapidly to East Hall.

When, in response to his repeated knocks upon the door, admittance at last was gained, Carlton was startled when he saw that his classmate was sobbing violently.

"Are you hurt?" he inquired anxiously as he entered the room and closed the door.

"Not outside, but inside," sobbed Perkins. "What am I going to do?"

Carlton was silent a moment before he replied, and then he said, "Perk, tell me about it. How did it happen?"

"Why, that little imp incarnate, Stone, pinned a placard on the back of my coat this morning when I left the chapel. I must have carried it with me at least an hour."

Carlton smiled dryly as he asked, "What was on the placard?"

"'Please jerk Perk.' Every fellow that I met that morning shook me around the walks, or pulled me out of my chair, or knocked my hat off, or did something just as bad. I tell you I can't stand it any longer!"

"Do you want me to tell you honestly just what I think?" said Carlton at last.

"If you want to."

Digitized by Google

"I shouldn't stand it a day longer, if I were in your place. I should go home."

"And leave school?" demanded Perkins abruptly, stopping in his walk about the room and staring at his visitor.

"That is exactly what I mean."

"I'll lose all the money I have spent this year," wailed Perkins, "if I do that."

"No, you won't," said Carlton quietly, and yet not unkindly. "Mr. Reed says you have learned a good many things, but that it's a waste of time and money for you to stay any longer and try to get what you call an education."

"But an education does such great things for a fellow," argued Perkins.

"So it does," acknowledged Carlton; "but Mr. Reed says you're making a mistake in thinking that only what you can get out of books is an education. There are wise fools, and foolish wise men, so he says, and when it comes to knowing some things, you know a good deal more about a loom than any fellow in the Tait School. But you don't know Latin or mathematics or German, and Mr. Reed thinks you will never know these enough to warrant you in going on with your studies."

"But think of what I will be able to do when I once get an education."

"Perk," said Carlton earnestly, "an education, as I told you, does not consist in studying books alone. Your teachers think it is foolish for you to spend

Digitized by Google

your time and money in trying to learn what you are not fitted to get. There isn't any use in a fellow trying to do the impossible. He can't walk on his head nor jump from the top of the chapel without being bumped hard when he strikes the ground. The bird can do that easily any time, because it is fitted for that, but a fellow can't."

"What has that to do with it?" demanded Perkins. "I don't want to give up just because it's hard. Suppose George Washington had quit because his work was hard?"

"That's all right," said Carlton; "but even George Washington knew enough not to let his raw soldiers fight the well-trained redcoats very often in the open field."

"I'll think about it," said Perkins abruptly, as his visitor departed.

To the intense surprise of Carlton, and to the astonishment as well as the dismay of the younger boys in the school, it was announced the following day that Perkins had left the school for "good and all."

The heart of little Stone was filled with remorse, and he acknowledged to Carlton that he deeply regretted the teasing which he had often started without any ill will toward Perkins.

"Maybe you'll learn your lesson," said Carlton quietly, "just the same as Perkins has learned his, and maybe as I'll learn mine, or am learning it, anyway. Perkins talked it over with the teachers, and

Digitized by Google

they said that a fellow had to have something besides poverty in order to make himself a successor to Webster or Ben Franklin. Mr. Reed advised Perk to quit. He has been telling him that ever since the year opened, but he wasn't willing to listen to him. He advised him that it was wasting the money which he had to work four years to save. But Mr. Reed says he hasn't wasted it entirely if he will learn the great lesson of it all. I am sure I hope he will."

"I'm mighty glad to hear you say that Mr. Reed says education isn't all books and studies," said Stone drolly. "Perhaps that may mean there's some hope for me some day."

"Not in the way you put it," said Carlton. "You can do the work all right, Stone, and if you don't do it you'll be the loser. Perkins couldn't do it, and he was only wasting his time in trying to do something that was impossible for him. Do you see what I mean?"

The effect of the departure of Perkins from the school was soon gone, as far as most of the boys were concerned.

The end of the year was now rapidly approaching. Baseball was at its zenith, and the success which attended the efforts of the Tait School nine served in a large measure to atone for the failure of the football team.

Again, as in the days when Captain Dan Richards had been the leading spirit, the nine won the cham-

Digitized by Google

pionship of the league, defeating the Military Academy in two of three close games.

As Webb was the captain of the nine, the fact that both Anceps and Carlton were players did not lead to any active friction between the two boys.

The attitude of Anceps, however, was unchanged, and do what he might Carlton was unable to modify his feeling.

He was aware that a part of the school still looked upon him as having failed at a time when his work was most demanded. On the other hand, however, his friends were not few and served in a large measure to allay the mortification which had been experienced by him in the earlier part of the school year.

The closing week brought its own excitement and pleasures. Proud parents, families, and friends of the young graduates flocked into the beautiful little village until the streets presented a scene of activity and color seen only at this annual occurrence.

With the sole exception of Anceps, there was a softening of all the bitter feelings of the year. He still held himself aloof and steadily refused to have anything to do with Carlton or with the more intimate friends of his rival.

Seated in Carlton's room, Fletcher and Webb were having their final interview with their classmate.

"I guess it isn't any different here," Fletcher was saying, "from what it is outside the school. A

Digitized by Google

fellow has his friends and his enemies, and he cannot help himself. If he does something, he's bound to make somebody angry as well as somebody glad."

"My father says," joined in Webb, "that no man can succeed in this world without making enemies; that envy is always the price of success. I don't mean that if a fellow makes enemies just because he is disagreeable; that doesn't take any brains, and doesn't mean anything at all; but if a fellow does his part and goes straight ahead, he's bound to find some things in his way. He can stop, he can turn back, or he can go ahead."

"I guess if he goes ahead he's going to know what he has to do," laughed Fletcher.

"Do you know," inquired Carlton in a low voice, "what fellows have taught me the most that I have learned this year?"

"We're too modest to suggest their names, but of course everybody knows that the initial of one is F and of the other is W," laughed Fletcher in that contagious way which had won him so many friends.

"They have done their part," acknowledged Carlton, "but there are others who have taught me even more than you have."

"I guess one of them is Anceps and the other is Perk," laughed Webb.

"That's it, exactly."

"What!" exclaimed Webb, sitting quickly erect in his chair. "What! You don't mean it!"

Digitized by Google

"Yes, I do mean it," said Carlton quietly. "Anceps has taught me how to hang on to a thing and not let go just because it's hard. Of course he's made a lot of trouble for me, and I have suffered more than I can tell you or would tell any one else, but he put me on my mettle too, and I just wouldn't give up."

"What was the valuable lesson which our good and great friend Perkins taught you?" inquired Fletcher.

"He taught me the lesson to do with my might what my hands find to do, but not to waste time on what is impossible. Mr. Reed told me that the difference between Cæsar and Napoleon was that Cæsar knew what he couldn't do, and never wasted time in trying, while Napoleon never found out what he couldn't do, and so met his Waterloo at last."

"I guess Mr. Reed is about right," said Fletcher, as he and his companion departed from the room.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HW 1XMH Z

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google